PRIMA'S OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

THE ULTIMATE IN FIRST-PERSON SQUAD WARFARE

TRIBES

STARSIEGE™

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Prima's Official Strategy Guide

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Prima Publishing
Rocklin, California
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Acknowledgments

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FOREWORD

You hold in your hands something special. This is a guide for the first game to focus on the excitement and special challenge of *strategic squad-based play*. The strategies and tips you find inside will shape the way your team handles itself in the ever-changing, virtual battlefields of Starsiege TRIBES.

TRIBES was designed to maximize multiplayer, team-based play. With that goal in mind, we built in a lot of innovative elements to reward organized squads and coordinated strategies. Features like the Commander Screen, all the communications options, and the multitude of remote sensors allow a squad to plan tactics and launch sophisticated attacks. You'll see quickly as you get deeper into the TRIBES environment that traditional deathmatch-oriented players who fight alone will be little or no threat when up against a disciplined, well-trained squad. A commander with imagination can systematically bombard enemy positions, stage diversions, coordinate assaults, and sucker opponents into traps. In short, the choice of who leads you on the battlefield now becomes hugely important. Poor commanders won't last long.

The other side of the equation involves squad discipline. Raw skill will still be important, but so will the ability of players to carry out orders. Well-drilled squads will become the kings of the new battlefield, while teams who can't learn to work together will be mulched, no matter how awesome their general. Players will build reputations for being good soldiers or unreliable mavericks. Squads will build reputations around how well they conceive and execute strategy, how daring or conservative they are in their planning, and on how well they hold their cool under fire.

The TRIBES community will grow, too (see www.tribesplayers.com). Alliances will become more important, since it's going to be crucial to depend on a companion squad. Multi-squad warfare in the sweeping terrain of Starsiege TRIBES will showcase commander talents and squad skill in working alongside other squads to achieve common objectives. Naturally, some squads (let's call 'em "Tribes" now) will specialize in certain kinds of warfare. Some will prefer full frontal assaults; others will become adept at stealth and sniping. Any way you look at it, the team element suddenly becomes paramount. Your allies' talents become almost as important as those of your own Tribe.

Your Tribe's organization is a final component to consider. Will you have sub-commanders? Will you be the kind of general who sticks to directing troops and rarely enters combat, or will you give orders from the field? How will you organize your Tribe? Create fire support teams? Assault teams? Recon teams? Remember that even with the huge and sweeping landscapes, tribal warriors are

still incredibly mobile. Your sub-commanders will have to be able to think on their feet. You can't be directing everyone at once.

So you want to be one of the legendary commanders, the leader of an elite Tribe? You'll have to think about weapon selection, movement of troops, unit organization, use of terrain, coordination of attacks, vehicle use, deployment of remotes, mine placement, defensive considerations — and plenty more. Fortunately, just about everything you need to lead your online forces to greatness is right inside this book. Read on. It's a whole new world of squad-based strategy and tactics out there. And now you've got the jump.

Tim Gift aka "Slacker" – Director, Starsiege TRIBES
Scott Youngblood aka "Cornboy!"– Game Designer, Starsiege TRIBES
Mark Frohnmayer aka "Got Milk?"– Lead Programmer, Starsiege TRIBES

January 1999
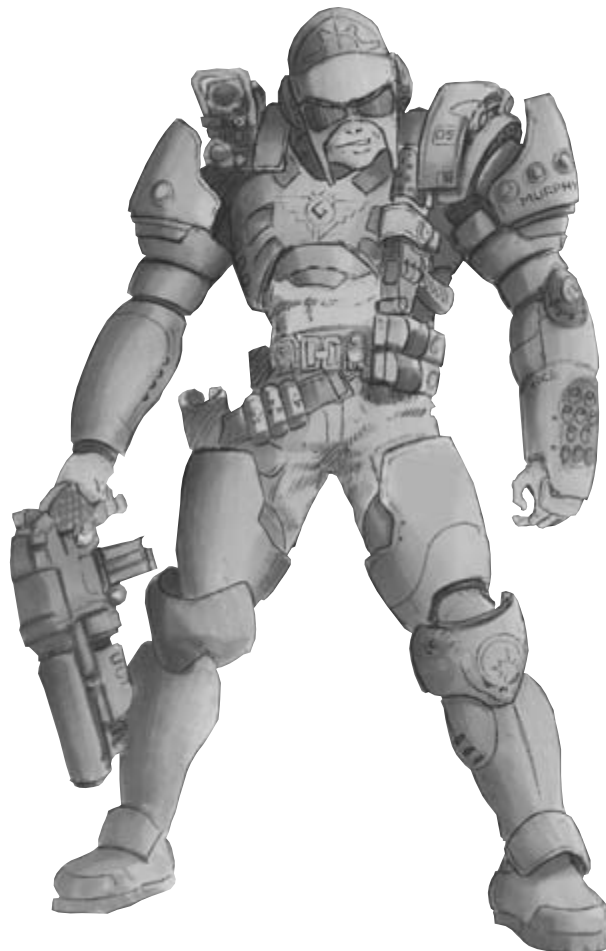
Introduction

I f you recently bought *Tribes,* you already know that it's an intense game of multiplayer action and strategy. But what you might *not* know—especially if you haven't played it for long—is that we're not kidding about the strategy.

We understand if you're skeptical. Most 3D action games pay lip service to both action and strategy. But somewhere along the way, the strategy part ends up in the scrap heap. Sure, the action is fast and frantic, but it's also paper-thin. Dig beneath the surface, and you'll find a lot of nothing.

Tribes is genuinely different. It requires skill and reflexes, but it also requires a whole lot more. There's a place for fast moves and quick trigger fingers, but there's also a place for stealth, cunning, and carefully orchestrated tactics. It helps to have played other 3D action games, but the skills you learned there will only take you halfway to greatness in *Tribes.* That's because *Tribes* pushes multiplayer action to the next level, rewarding smart play and good organization.

The end result is a game with a steep learning curve. If you're used to just pointing, shooting, and winning, then you're in for a painful surprise. Even players expecting a challenge may be overwhelmed by the limitless options of *Tribes:* Which weapon to use? Which armor? Where to go? What to do? The answers, you'll find, are seldom easy.

Why slog through all this complexity? The answer is simple: It allows for a depth of strategy that is unknown in other 3D action games. That initial learning period may be tough—sure, you'll take your knocks—but there comes a moment when everything starts to make sense. When that moment arrives, and you start to master *Tribes'* possibilities rather than fear them, the game becomes extremely rewarding. Instead of winning with reflexes and luck, you'll win with skill and knowledge. It's a thrill that few other games can offer.

The only downside to all this depth is the time it takes to master it. When you join your first game, chances are good that you'll be shell-shocked. Nothing will make sense, you won't know what to do, and everyone but you will seem to have a sense of purpose.

That's where this guide comes into play. Read it thoroughly and use it as a companion while you play *Tribes.* Consult it when you're confused. It'll help get you through those difficult early games and guide you toward excellence once you've got the basics mastered.

And whatever you do, don't give up—at least not until you've played *Tribes* a good long while. It takes time, even with the help of this book, to figure the game out. And once you do, you'll be glad you stuck around.

1

Tribes—An Overview

Tribes can be both difficult and frustrating, especially for a beginner. This chapter helps ease you into the game.

The first part of this chapter explains what makes *Tribes* unique. The second part gives you the lowdown on what you'll find in this book, and exactly where to find it. Finally, the third part gives you a plan that'll help you through your first few games.

This book isn't foolproof; it can't save you from getting blown to smithereens countless times, and it can't substitute for practice. It will, however, help you learn faster, so you can progress beyond the role of cannon fodder in a relatively short period of time. Keep reading, and you'll learn how to start that process.

What Makes Tribes Unique?

Tribes sets itself apart from other games with its steep learning curve. You can't just jump in and start mindlessly shooting and hope to help your team. But there are other differences as well. Let's briefly review the biggest differences.

Team Play

First and foremost, *Tribes* is a team game. If you don't acknowledge your teammates, you probably won't get far, even if you have good combat skills. On the other hand, if you're a good team player, you can compensate for poor combat skills. Team play cuts both ways.

If you're used to playing individualistic, death-match-style multiplayer games, you'll have to constantly remind yourself to play as a team member. Otherwise, you're doomed to frustration.
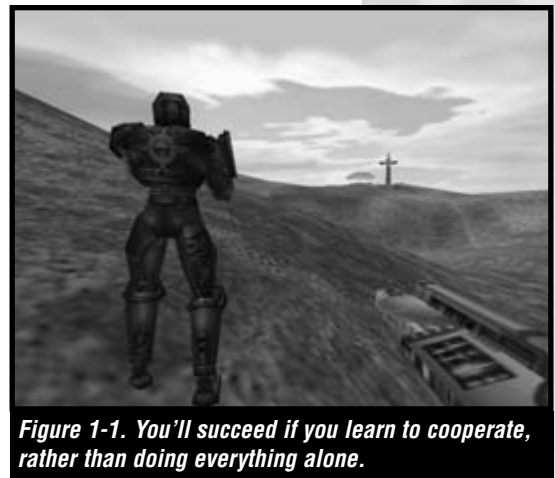
Figure 1-1. You'll succeed if you learn to cooperate, rather than doing everything alone.

Complexity

We've already stated that *Tribes* is complex. We aren't just talking about *overt* complexity, though. It's the subtle things that make *Tribes* so intricate. Players must use complicated team strategies and take advantage of weapons' subtle nuances. Furthermore, players must view the game from a strategic, "big picture" viewpoint instead of getting absorbed in meaningless tactical exchanges.

Variation

Tribes is played on a variety of maps, and the rules change from game to game. Some missions require your team to collect and hold flags, while other missions require you to actually "capture" the flag. Other assignments require you to maintain control of towers for a given amount of time. To master *Tribes,* you must learn to be flexible and adapt your style of play to fit the current scenario.

Figure 1-2. This mission requires you to capture and hold towers, like the one seen here. Other missions have different objectives.

Challenge

Tribes is challenging. The exact level of challenge depends on who you're playing against and how good your teammates are. When you first start out, anyone with experience will be able to defeat you; later, you'll come into your own. No matter how good you get, you'll find that the level of challenge remains consistently high. The people who play *Tribes* thrive on competition, and many of them are highly dedicated. You'll need every bit of information in this book, plus a lot of practice, to reach a level where you can challenge them.

The Contents of This Book

This book is designed to help get you through those tough early games and become a competent *Tribes* player. To benefit from the information, you first need to know where to find it. Here's a look at every chapter of this book, and a brief description of what each contains:

- Chapter 1 is what you're reading now.

- Chapter 2 discusses weapons and armor. It provides a thorough description of each item, insightful strategies on how to use it, and a numerical rating of its damage or protection.

- Chapter 3 examines packs and miscellaneous items and discusses how you can use them to improve your game.

- Chapter 4 reviews terrain features and vehicles. You'll learn how to fly Scout Flyers and Transports. You'll also gain insight into the major terrain features (such as turrets) that loom large in the *Tribes* landscape.

- Chapter 5 discusses combat, explaining the techniques that separate great fighters from Heavy Mortar fodder.

- Chapter 6 explains key game concepts and helps you translate your understanding of those concepts into better play.

- Chapter 7 puts everything you've learned to this point into practice and walks you through the single-player training missions.
- Chapter 8 provides detailed tips on surviving your first few multiplayer games.
- Chapter 9 is a primer on defense, explaining the ins and outs of defending a base, flag, or other significant locales.
- Chapter 10 is a primer on reconnaissance, sniping, and "mid-field" play.
- Chapter 11 is a primer on offense, providing strategies for taking out enemy targets with stealth, speed, or power.
- Chapter 12 is a primer on commanding your teammates.
- Chapter 13 provides advanced strategies, including strategies specific to each map. It also offers suggestions on how to keep improving your game.
- The appendices offer information on joining a Tribe and provide easy-reference weapon damage tables.

Getting Started in Tribes

Here's the worst-case scenario: You buy *Tribes,* rush home, rip it open, and install it. Eager for some action, you jump online and join a multiplayer game. It's chaos. There are players running everywhere, both friend and foe. Unfamiliar weapons fire at you, but you have no idea what they are or how to avoid them. And then, before you really get a chance to figure out what's going on, you're dead.

Figure 1-3. There's no doubt about it: Your first few games are going to be rough.

You start over, but you have no more luck than before. Perhaps you manage to kill a foe. You're elated, but then you realize that the game isn't keeping track of kills. Instead, you're supposed to achieve a primary objective—but you aren't quite sure how to do it. More frustration.

Eventually the game ends, and another begins—and again, you have no idea what you're doing.

This is a tough way to approach *Tribes,* even if you pride yourself on your skill at 3D shooters. Sure, you'll figure the game out eventually, but it'll take a while and undoubtedly try your patience. Instead, you might want to follow the suggestions outlined in the next few pages.

Read the Manual

Step one is to read the game manual. This might sound obvious, but many game players—the author included—like to leap right in and play. That works just fine in simple action games. But it's a bad idea in *Tribes*—especially if you're playing against highly skilled opponents that don't give you time to think and learn.

Before playing, therefore, skim the manual and try to get at least a general sense of what the game is about. It'll be hard to cram everything into your brain right away since you won't have any

playing experiences to relate the information to. Nevertheless, it'll provide a framework of understanding that will be useful when you do fire up the game.

While you're at it, you can read Part I of this book, or any sections of Part I that interest you. (Part I encompasses Chapters 1-7.)

Play the Training Missions

The next step is to play the single-player training missions included with *Tribes*.
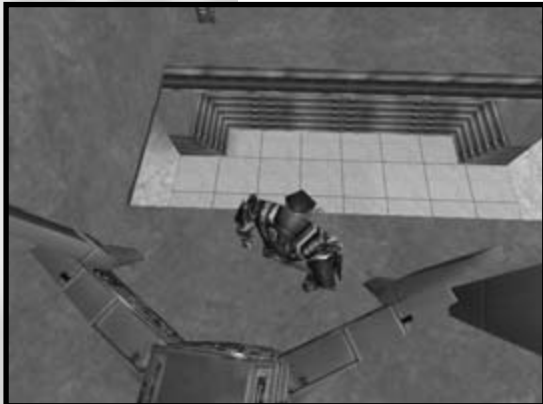
Figure 1-4. Play the training missions first.

Again, this may seem obvious: Training missions are the logical first choice, right? But as with the game manual, training missions tend to be overlooked by experienced (or impatient) game players. Play through all of the training missions—and don't just beat them, but *master* them. Make sure that you understand what you did to win.

As you play the training missions, you'll find yourself asking any number of questions: What's that thing on the ground? What sort of turret am I looking at? Why can't I get inside that base? Refer to both the manual and Part I of this book as you play through these missions. Chapter 5 contains detailed information on the training missions, but all of Part I (Chapters 1-7) applies to the challenges you'll face.

Finish Part I

If you haven't finished reading Part I of this book by the time you've completed every training mission, go back and finish it now.

Even if you already read them, feel free to skim through those first seven chapters again. You're likely to learn more this time than you did on the first reading because you can now relate the information to actual gameplay experiences.

Play Online

Next, go online and play a game or three. Refer to the game manual for information on how to do this, and be sure to read the section entitled Ping and Lag. It'll help you connect to a server that your computer communicates well with, so you'll at least have a fighting chance.

As you play online, expect to be confused. Don't worry about contributing to the team effort—in fact, don't worry about anything. Just try different weapons, explore the map, and above all, try to observe. Watch what other players are doing.

Figure 1-5. Don't expect to excel in your first few games. Just try figure things out and get your bearings.

After playing a couple of discouraging games, you might be tempted to call it quits. Don't even think about it! The only reason you played those games was to gain a bit of experience. The more experience you have with the game, the easier it is for you to grasp the concepts explained both in the game manual and this book.

Read More of This Book

Now that you've played through the single-player missions and tasted multiplayer combat, you might want to sit down and read the rest of this book. How much or how little you read depends on your personal tastes. In any case, you'll find that the information in Part II will help make you a better player.

Onward

Ultimately, it's entirely up to you how to read this book. You can read it all in one sitting, refer to it sparingly like a dictionary, or just read the parts that interest you. The path described above is merely one way to access the information.

Without further ado then, let's get on with the book. There's a lot of information for you to digest, so take it slowly and remember: It takes time to master *Tribes*. Stick with it, and you *will* improve.

Figure 1-6. It's a long road to complete mastery of the game, but you'll get there if you practice.

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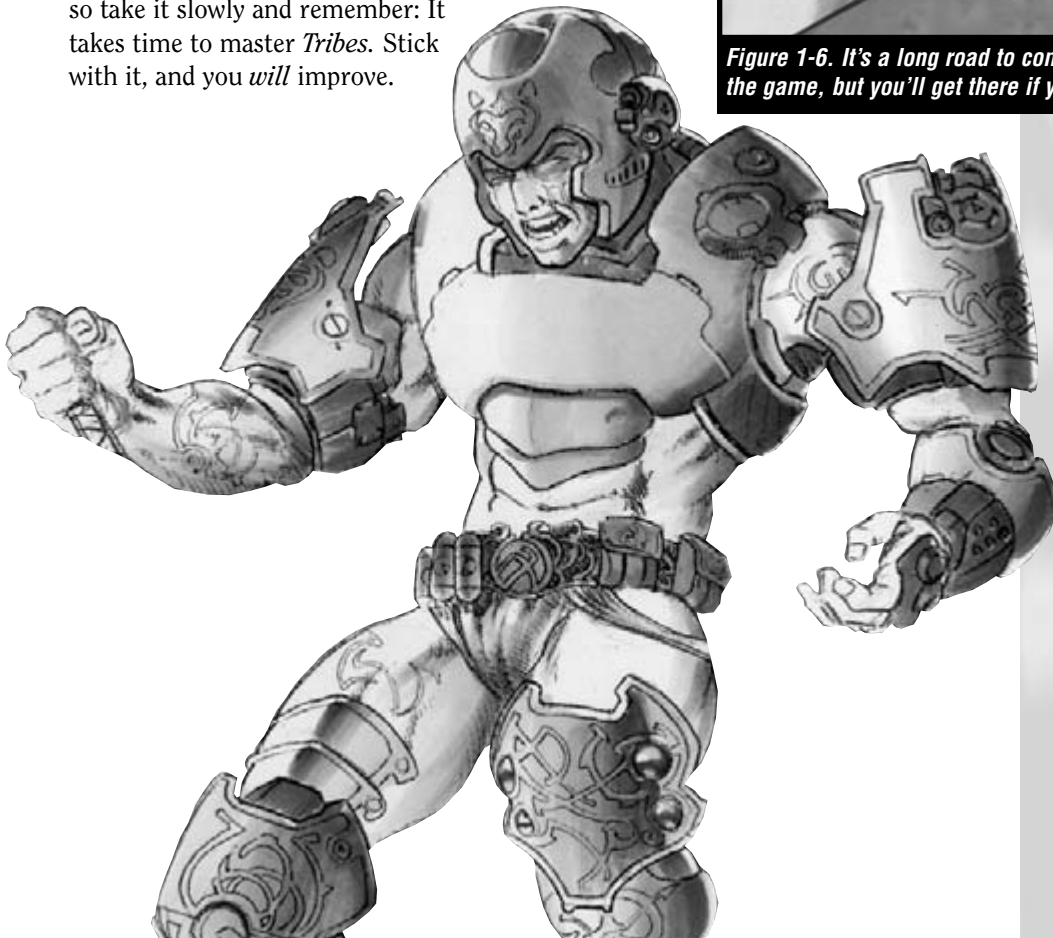
Armor & Weapons

This chapter reviews the armor and weapons of *Tribes*. You can get basic information on these items from your game manual. But this chapter goes a step farther and provides hard data on the damage each weapon does, and the punishment each armor type can absorb. Furthermore, this chapter explains each armor and weapon type's strengths, weaknesses, and quirks, so you'll have a more complete understanding of each item's capabilities.

Armor is discussed first because your armor determines both the number and type of weapons that you can carry. Weapons are covered next. Finally, the end of the chapter contains detailed numerical data on both weapons and armor.

Armor

There are three types of armor available to you. Every armor type performs certain common functions. It protects you, gives you access to PDA displays like the Commander Screen, and has jump jets that allow you to travel quickly from place to place.

Despite these common traits, the three armor types are very distinct. Here's a comprehensive look at how the armor types differ.

Light Armor *(Peltast)*
Speed: Fast
Protection: Low
Max. Weapon Load: 3

Light Armor affords very little protection, leaving you vulnerable to weapons fire of all descriptions. It can't carry many weapons either, so you'll have to be selective when you wear this armor.

Why suffer these inconveniences? The upside of Light Armor is its incredible mobility. Light Armor lets you run much faster than the other armor types, and its jump jets carry you *much* higher. Sure, you're vulnerable in light armor, but your speed lets you pick and choose your fights and evade shots that would otherwise hit you.

Light Armor, when used in conjunction with the Energy Pack, allows you to carry the Laser Rifle. This deadly, long-range sniper's weapon is extremely potent and is barred from the other two armor classes. On the downside, however, wearers of Light Armor can't carry Remote Turrets or Remote Inventory Stations.
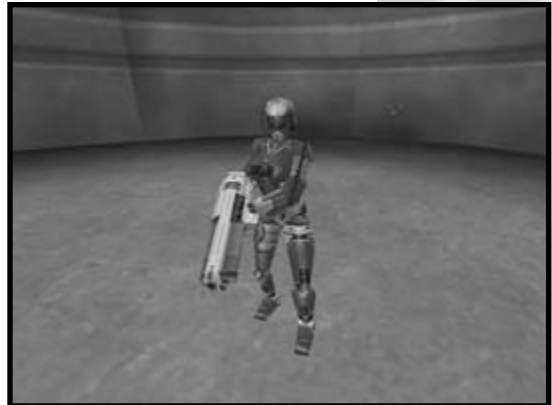
Figure 2-1. Light Armor allows unparalleled mobility. It is also the default armor for the game.

> *You can only pilot a flying vehicle while you're wearing Light Armor. Players in other armor types can be passengers, but they can't fly the craft.*

The value of the Light Armor's mobility can't be overstated. Heavier armor types can be slow and unwieldy whereas Light Armor is ideal for speed. Light Armor wearers have more movement options than wearers of heavier armor. For example, when assaulting a multi-level base, Light Armor wearers can often fly up to the roof and then drop down inside the base. Heavier armor types often can't make it that far and thus are forced to enter through lower portals.

Light Armor is ideal for the would-be sniper, for players trying to establish a sensor network quickly, and for perimeter base defense. It's also the best armor to use for snatch-and-grab tactics. For example, you can sneak into an enemy base undetected, take the flag, and run away. Heavier armor types may be more durable, but their lack of speed makes them unsuited for raids requiring pure stealth and speed.

Ultimately, like every armor type, Light Armor can be used effectively in almost every situation. The key is to become familiar with its strengths and weaknesses. That way, you instinctively capitalize on the former, while avoiding situations that let your enemy exploit the latter.

Medium Armor *(Hoplite)*

Speed: Medium
Protection: Moderate
Max. Weapon Load: 4

Extremes are interesting. Most players relish the idea of being the fastest player in the game, or carrying the biggest gun, or having the best armor. Medium Armor offers none of those things; it's middle-of-the-road; it isn't flashy.

Medium Armor, in fact, is an excellent armor type that's suitable for most tasks. Defending your base, laying down a sensor network, and assaulting the enemy are all perfectly feasible in Medium Armor. Let's look at these in turn.

> *Medium Armor wearers can carry any weapon, save for the Laser Rifle or Mortar. They can also carry any pack.*

Figure 2-2. Medium Armor provides a good mix of speed and durability.

On defense, Medium Armor is a good choice if you plan to be fairly active. If you're only planning on guarding a very small, enclosed area, then go with Heavy Armor. If you plan to patrol, and lay down a grid of Remote Turrets and Motion Sensors, the Medium Armor lets you get around faster.

On offense, groups of players in Medium Armor are a very common and potent threat. Medium Armor is tough enough to withstand a few dings. On the other hand, it doesn't render its wearer helplessly immobile in the face of snipers or fast, Light Armor-wearing harassers.

When laying down a network of sensors, turrets, and jammers, Medium Armor is slower than Light Armor. However, it's capable of carrying a Remote Inventory Station, which tends to speed along the process of building infrastructure.

All things considered, there are very few times when you should actively *avoid* Medium Armor. If you're planning on an activity that tests the extremes of mobility or endurance, you'll probably want to go with Light or Heavy Armor. For example, pure snatch-and-grab commando raids and pure sniper missions are extremely hard to accomplish without Light Armor. And defensive roles, like blocking a corridor, standing next to a flag, or occupying a small structure all by yourself, usually call for Heavy Armor.

Learn to use Medium Armor and respect its blend of abilities. Though it lacks the specialized power of Light and Heavy Armor, it also lacks those armors' glaring disadvantages.

Heavy Armor *(Myrmidon)*

Speed: Slow
Protection: High
Max. Weapon Load: 4

Heavy Armor is extremely tempting to the beginner. After all, it's the biggest armor, the toughest armor, and it can pack the most firepower. What's not to love?

    While Heavy Armor is indeed powerful—*extremely* powerful when used properly—it takes more experience to use correctly than any other type. And while Heavy Armor can carry just about anything—and lots of it—the armor's extreme sluggishness makes it vulnerable in wide-open situations.

    A lone player in Heavy Armor, walking across an open landscape, is ludicrously vulnerable to skilled players in Light or Medium Armor. The Heavy Armor wearer can't run or jump fast enough to avoid most projectiles, and he or she certainly can't pursue enemies. This allows Light or Medium-Armored foes to fight on their own terms. They can snipe at the Heavy Armor wearer from great distances, hide whenever it's convenient, and run away whenever it suits them. Unless the Heavy Armor wearer is highly skilled with the Mortar or the Blaster, or the enemies get too close, the Heavy Armor wearer loses.

    Wear the Heavy Armor for roles that place you in enclosed spaces and don't require much movement. For example, defend a small base, or guard a flag by standing right next to it in Heavy Armor. You won't do very well if you have to cover lots of ground. Similarly, defending the perimeter of a base in Heavy Armor usually doesn't work too well. Raiders in Light Armor can usually run right past you, acquire their target, and run away while you're lumbering to catch up.

Figure 2-3. Heavy Armor is slow, but it carries heavy loads and takes a beating.

    If you wear Heavy Armor in the open field, be sure to take a friend or two along. Your pals can spot for your Heavy Mortar with their Targeting Lasers. And they can defend you from lightly armored foes who would otherwise pick you apart from long range. Also, if one of your comrades has a Repair Kit, he or she can continually repair your armor. That makes you even harder to kill.

    The bottom line is that Heavy Armor is extremely potent, but unless it's in an enclosed space, it needs support from teammates.

Weapons

Every weapon in *Tribes* has a use, though some weapons are clearly more specialized than others. Learning how weapons perform and how to capitalize on their strengths, as well as avoid their weaknesses, is integral to mastering the game.

Every weapon described below has an entry called Shots to Kill. This entry lists the number of accurate shots required with that weapon to kill players in each of the three armor types. ("Accurate" shots are shots that squarely hit the player, instead of narrowly missing and causing splash damage.)

Also, every weapon has an Ammo entry, expressed as three numbers separated by slashes. These numbers are the maximum amounts of ammo that each armor type (Light, Medium, and Heavy) can carry for that weapon, without an Ammo Pack.

Instead of numbers, the word "Infinite" may appear in the Ammo entry. That means the weapon is energy-based and can fire indefinitely, drawing power from your armor's built-in energy source.

Finally, if a dash (—) appears in the Ammo entry, it means that the armor type can't carry the weapon. So, for example, the Laser Rifle's Ammo columns look like this: Infinite/—/—. That's because Medium and Heavy Armor can't wield the Laser Rifle.

Blaster

Shots to Kill: 4 vs. Light, 10 vs. Medium, 17 vs. Heavy
Ammo: Infinite/Infinite/Infinite

The Blaster is a commonly overlooked weapon. It's small, it doesn't deal massive damage with a single shot, and it's not too impressive to look at. Still, the Blaster can be a highly effective weapon if used in the proper situations.

The Blaster isn't great at close-range combat though it is adequate if you're a good shot. Its chief use is in long-range battles; its projectiles are deceptively fast, and they fire rapidly. If you can hit with one Blaster projectile, several more are likely to hit before your enemy gets out of the way.

The Blaster's energy-based power source makes it a good backup weapon. You'll never run out of Blaster ammo.

Players wearing Light Armor are unlikely to want to carry the Blaster, especially if they already have the Laser Rifle. The Laser Rifle is more powerful, its beam covers great distances instantaneously, and it's harder to
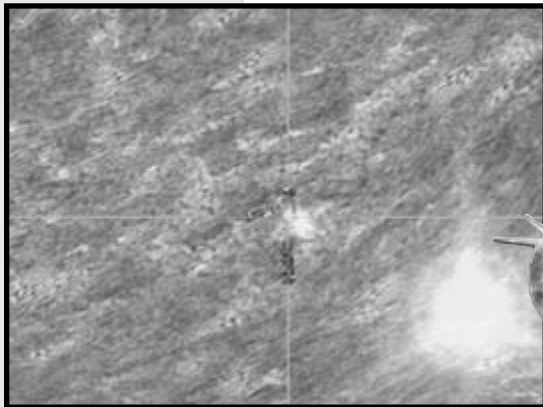
Figure 2-4. The Blaster isn't many players' first choice, but it's second only to the Laser Rifle at long range.

trace back to the source. The Blaster is more useful than the Laser Rifle in mid-range and close-range combat. But at those ranges the Light Armor wearer can usually produce something better; the Chaingun, Disk Launcher, and Plasma Gun all come to mind.

But for Medium or Heavy Armor wearers, the Blaster functions as sort of a "poor man's" Laser Rifle. For these armor types, it serves a vital purpose beyond sniping at unwary targets: It allows players in Medium or Heavy Armor to force the enemy to *move*. Without it, heavily armored players can find themselves in the position of having no effective response when sniped at from afar by Light Armor wearers. The Blaster fires quickly enough to force a Light Armored enemy to move and dodge. Thus it buys time for heavier armor types to move to better ground.

Ultimately, the Blaster is a deceptively powerful weapon. It's extremely good at picking off players from a distance, especially when they fail to move around. And the Blaster is useful as a "brush-back" weapon. It's used to keep distant enemies on their toes so they can't dig in and fire at you nonstop from a fixed position.

Plasma Gun

Shots to Kill: 2 vs. Light, 3 vs. Medium, 4 vs. Heavy
Ammo: 25/35/50

While beginners tend to gravitate toward powerful explosive weapons like the Disk Launcher and the Grenade Launcher, make no mistake: The Plasma Gun is also a heavy hitter.

The Plasma Gun's projectiles aren't as fast as the Disk Launcher's explosive Disks, and they dissolve into nothingness at long range. So the Plasma Gun is inappropriate for sniping or for shooting at extremely nimble targets at medium to long range.

On the plus side, the Plasma Gun's projectiles damage everything in a small radius around them. And its rate of fire is higher than that of the similarly powered Disk Launcher. The Plasma Gun also deals excellent damage against heavily armored targets, such as foes in Heavy Armor and stationary objects.

Figure 2-5. The Plasma Gun is a heavy hitter, excelling at damaging heavily armored targets.

The Plasma Gun is one of very few weapons that's powerful enough to take out a Plasma Turret or Pulse Sensor by itself. You'll have to rapid-fire at your target for quite some time, however, to destroy it.

When should you use the Plasma Gun, and when should you use another weapon? Here are a few suggestions.

Put away the Plasma Gun when you're firing at long-range targets.

When firing at mid-range targets, try to use the Plasma Gun against foes that are relatively sluggish. The Disk Launcher's faster projectiles reach the mark more quickly than those of the Plasma Gun, ensuring better accuracy.

At short to point-blank range, the Plasma Gun tends to edge out the Disk Launcher because of its better rate of fire. You should also consider the Chaingun at that range.

Also, there's one more thing to consider. The Disk Launcher is better than the Plasma Gun against Light and Medium Armor. However, the Plasma Gun is absolutely *great* against Heavy Armor and big, stationary objects such as Generators and Mini Fusion (Sentinel) Turrets. This makes the Plasma Gun an excellent tool for base assaults where you'll encounter both heavily armored defenders and lots of stationary objects to destroy.

> *The Plasma Gun carries more ammo than the Disk Launcher making it more attractive on missions where ammo shortages are likely.*

Chaingun

Shots to Kill: 5 vs. Light, 9 vs. Medium, 20 vs. Heavy
Ammo: 100/150/200

The Chaingun is a very simple weapon in the sense that it's extremely clear when and when not to use it. It's an excellent addition to your arsenal, provided that you find yourself in situations where you can put its power to good use.

The Chaingun spews a constant stream of explosive flechettes in the general direction it's pointed. While accurate at close range and medium-close range, the Chaingun's scattered bullets are completely ineffective at mid to long range. The bullets travel very quickly, so it's not a matter of projectile speed. The problem is that you never know where those bullets are headed. You should therefore put away the Chaingun when facing distant enemies, regardless of what armor they're wearing and how fast they're moving.

Figure 2-6. The Chaingun quickly finishes off enemies at close range.

At relatively close range, however, the Chaingun shreds through enemies in seconds flat. Nothing can withstand a steady stream of Chaingun fire. Better yet, there's no splash damage (as with the Plasma Gun and Disk Launcher). So you can mow down an opponent at point-blank range with the Chaingun. Very few weapons rival the Chaingun for short-range power.
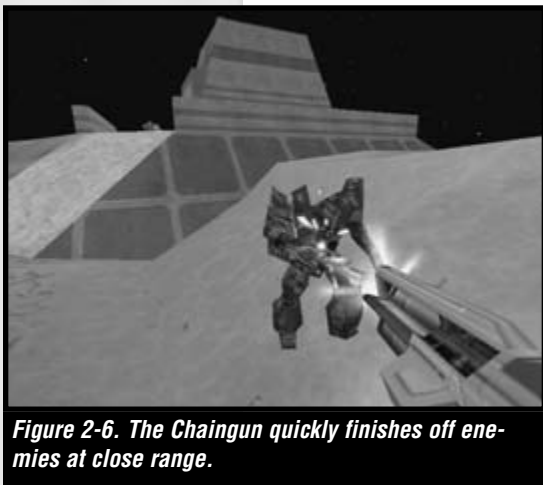
Several weapons are effective at close range. Should you use the Disk Launcher, the Plasma Gun, or the Chaingun? If you're having trouble hitting a fast enemy with a slower-firing weapon, then the Chaingun is a great choice. Its fast projectiles let you hose down your enemy. Just be sure to switch weapons if you find yourself fighting at medium to long range.

Similarly, if your enemy seems to be spending more time in the air than on the ground, the Chaingun can be a good ground-to-air weapon. (It's almost impossible to hit a jumping enemy with the Disk Launcher or Plasma Gun, especially if you're on the ground.)

> *Bear in mind that you **never** want to stand flat-footed while your opponent jumps over you. If you **must** stand on the ground, then the Chaingun is good for shooting foes out of the sky. Generally speaking though, you want to get into the sky as well, or else you'll be easy to hit.*

The Chaingun is at its best on relatively flat, obstacle-free terrain. If there are lots of corners, steep ridges, or other easy hiding places, your opponent can pop in and out of cover. This makes it hard to hose him or her down with the Chaingun. Try using a single-shot weapon in these cases instead.

Finally, if you're skilled at staying close to the enemy while avoiding return fire, the Chaingun is an excellent weapon. If you aren't comfortable with fighting at extremely close range, stick with a weapon that lets you fight from a distance. Or choose one that lets you pop in and out of cover.

Disk Launcher

Shots to Kill: 2 vs. Light, 2 vs. Medium, 5 vs. Heavy
Ammo: 15/15/15

The Disk Launcher is a standard-issue weapon. Not only is it common, but it's highly effective within certain parameters.

The Disk Launcher deals very good damage, the disks it fires travel quickly, and they explode on impact to damage everything within a short radius. The Disk Launcher's reload time is significant, however, so it can't rapid-fire like a Chaingun or Blaster.

> *Generally, if your foes are very agile and move around a lot, aim for the ground near their feet instead of trying for direct hits. With the Disk Launcher, the "splash damage" from the disks' blast radius is almost as good as a direct hit.*
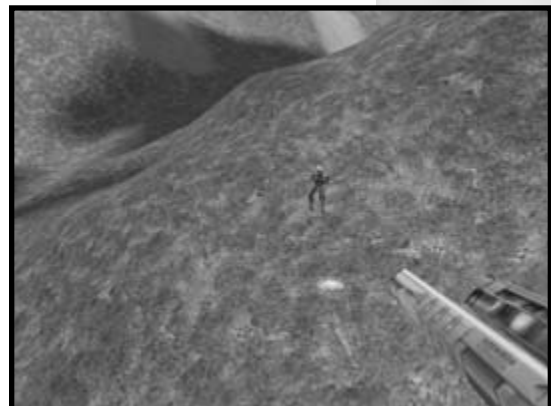
Figure 2-7. A standard-issue weapon, the Disk Launcher is extremely versatile.

The Disk Launcher is a good choice for common combat tasks, but it's poor at extremes. For example, when extreme range separates you from the target, the Disk Launcher's disks aren't fast enough against a moving enemy.

Against extremely close-range enemies, the Disk Launcher's sluggish reload time coupled with its splash damage make it somewhat inferior to the Chaingun. However, it can be effective if you make the most of your jump jets and cover.

The Disk Launcher is better than the Plasma Gun against Light Armored foes. This is because its disks travel faster than plasma, and the disks deal more damage than plasma against Light Armor. However, the disks are significantly weaker against Heavy Armor and stationary objects. If possible, pull out the Plasma Gun, Grenade Launcher, or Chaingun to deal with these heavier targets.

Above all else, remember that the Disk Launcher is extremely versatile, and it can be used very effectively for most combat tasks. Even when you're using it in a role it wasn't designed for, you still have a fighting chance. That's the truest testament to the weapon's broad range of applications.

> *The Disk Launcher, like many weapons, is easier to fire when you're jetting in the air and looking down at your enemy. Trying to hit an enemy on your level with a Disk Launcher can be hard because it's difficult to get the angle just right.*
>
> *Enemies standing on a hillside are also easy prey since disks that hit the hill behind them will often damage them.*

Grenade Launcher

Shots to Kill: 2 vs. Light, 2 vs. Medium, 5 vs. Heavy
Ammo: 10/10/15

The Grenade Launcher is a powerful beast. Shot for shot, no mobile weapon, save for the Heavy Mortar, can deal out more punishment. But this vast power comes at a price, and the Grenade Launcher is a relatively specialized weapon in the hands of the inexperienced.

The Grenade Launcher deals great damage, and its Grenades affect a wide radius. It's a true "room clearing" weapon, perfect for damaging several enemies at once or wrecking a room full of sensitive objects. The Grenades can also be fired fairly quickly, resulting in massive damage over a short period of time.

Figure 2-8. It takes practice to master the Grenade Launcher's bouncing projectiles.

> *While you can destroy heavy turrets and Pulse Sensors with the Grenade Launcher, it takes multiple, perfect shots in rapid succession to do so. You'll find that the Heavy Mortar is the only weapon that performs that task with ease.*

Since Grenades fired at short range bounce around a bit before detonating, you can bounce them into an area without actually entering that area. For example, It's common to see players roll a Grenade over a ridge before crossing, or bounce several Grenades around a corner before moving in.

> *Get into the habit of lobbing Grenades into a base's open doorway or down its ceiling hatch before you enter yourself. This is a highly effective way of clearing out anyone who might be standing in there and destroying any Remote Turrets that have been placed nearby.*

Now for the downside. Grenades are hard to use out in the open, particularly against nearby foes in Light Armor. True, the Grenades have a big blast radius, but nimble foes can jet up into the sky (or laterally) and evade the Grenades. Meanwhile they can pelt you with a Chaingun, Disk Launcher, or other straight-shooting weapon.

If you become skillful enough with the Grenade Launcher, you can compensate for its deficiencies. Predicting where a jetting enemy will fall, then depositing a Grenade there, can be deadly. Similarly, lobbing Grenades at a foe who's standing at the bottom of a hill (where the Grenades will bounce into his lap) can be fun. But a smart, agile enemy in Light Armor can capitalize on the Grenades' delayed blast and get out of the way more often than not.

Be particularly careful when using Grenades on steeply inclined terrain. Lobbing Grenades downhill at an enemy is safe, but an enemy atop a sharp ridge is nearly impossible to hit. Grenades will simply bounce away and roll down either side of the ridge. Worse yet, if you happen to be standing on low ground, the Grenades might bounce back at you.

The bottom line is to use the Grenade Launcher against bases, against heavy foes, and in any situation where indirect fire is an asset. Don't use it to attack Light Armored scouts or enemies atop a hill, or you'll find yourself missing more often than not.

Laser Rifle

Shots to Kill: 2/2 vs. Light, 3/2 vs. Medium, 6/4 vs. Heavy (Body/Head) Ammo: Infinite/—/—

The Laser Rifle is one of the most specialized weapons in the game and also one of the most powerful. It's essentially a powerful sniper rifle, deadly at long range but practically worthless up close.

The Laser Rifle is only available to a player in Light Armor who's wearing an Energy Pack. This severely limits the roles the Laser Rifle can be used in. If you aren't wearing the requisite Light Armor and Energy Pack, you'll have to be content to use the Blaster for extremely long-range attacks.

Assuming that you *can* use the Laser Rifle, it opens up a whole new role for you: That of sniper. Snipers are valuable both on offense and defense. On offense, they harass and pick off defenders and clear the way for

Figure 2-9. Nothing beats the Laser Rifle for long-range sniping.

attacks on the enemy base. On defense, they whittle down enemies before they get too close to the friendly base. And they harass heavy foes who would otherwise park themselves up on a hilltop and lob mortar shells onto the friendly base.

> *The Laser Rifle is the only weapon that rewards you for a head-shot. You'll do about 50 percent more damage if you hit your target in the head.*

The Laser Rifle is almost always used in conjunction with your armor's built-in Image Enhancer. Sniping is most effective against motionless or slow-moving enemies and enemies who don't yet real-ize you're there. Foes in Heavy Armor are particularly vulnerable to the Laser Rifle, due to their lack of speed and elusiveness.

You cannot kill a perfectly healthy enemy outright with the Laser Rifle. However, you can *almost* kill a lightly armored foe with one headshot—and the second shot will finish the job. Keep in mind that the power of each shot is dependent upon how much energy you have. Firing the Laser Rifle on low energy does little damage. Wait for full energy to efficiently and effectively use this weapon.

Use the Laser Rifle often, but recognize its weaknesses. Put it away whenever an enemy, especially one in Light Armor, decides to charge toward you and attack at close range.

Electron Flux Gun (ELF Gun)

Shots to Kill: 25 seconds vs. Light,
25 seconds vs. Medium, 25 seconds vs. Heavy
Ammo: 17/25 /33

The Electron Flux Gun is even more specialized than the Laser Rifle. It drains the energy from your target—a human enemy or an employed object such as a turret—and deals slight damage in the mean-time. It also "grabs" at human enemies, preventing them from escaping.

Since the Electron Flux Gun deals minimal dam-age, it's only a good choice if you plan to use some teamwork. For example, let's say that you and a friend, both in Light Armor, want to destroy a Fusion Turret. One of you can activate a Sensor Jammer Pack, approach the turret, and drain away its energy supply with the Electron Flux Gun. Since the turret's energy supply is used both for shooting and for shields, the ELF Gun effectively removes both its pro-

Figure 2-10. The Electron Flux Gun works best when you've got a friend with you.

tection and its ability to fire. That allows the second teammate to easily destroy the Fusion Turret with a minor weapon such as a Plasma Gun or even a Disk Launcher.

Another use for the Electron Flux Gun is to ground Light Armored enemies who are flying around and causing trouble. Sucking away their energy with the ELF Gun leaves them earthbound and less mobile. And if you get a good enough shot in, you can effectively freeze them in place. That allows your teammate to finish them off.
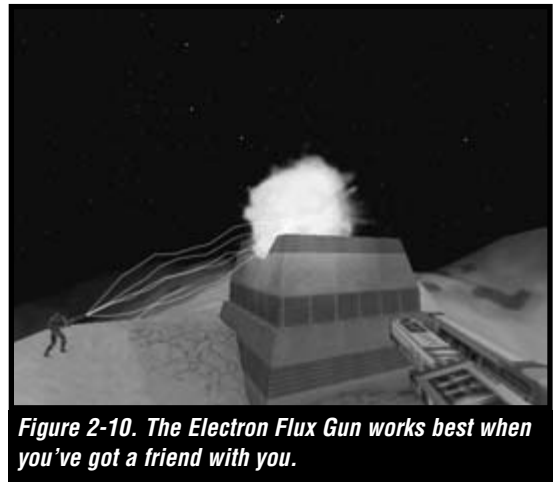
You'll find the Electron Flux Gun very difficult to use if you're playing commando. It's a valuable tool when you're working closely with your teammates.

Heavy Mortar

Shots to Kill: 1 vs. Light, 2 vs. Medium, 2 vs. Heavy
Ammo: —/—/10

The Heavy Mortar is only available when you're wearing Heavy Armor; this automatically limits how often you'll find yourself carrying it. But if you *are* wearing Heavy Armor, it's pretty much a given that you should take the Mortar. After all, you can carry lots of different weapons in Heavy Armor. Why not take the most powerful weapon available?

The Heavy Mortar has limited ammo, and its projectiles must be shot in an arc rather than a straight line. This makes aiming at distant targets a tricky proposition, unless you've got a friend using a Targeting Laser to paint the target.

> *If you've got a Heavy Mortar, you might want to use it in conjunction with an Ammo Pack. Otherwise, you'll run empty pretty quickly.*
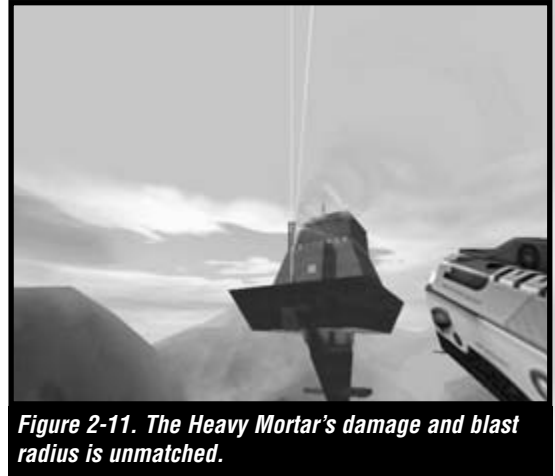
Figure 2-11. The Heavy Mortar's damage and blast radius is unmatched.

Since Heavy Mortar shells deal massive damage and have a huge blast radius, you'll find that they're invaluable for ruining enemy bases. In fact, the Heavy Mortar is the only handheld weapon potent enough to easily destroy heavy, emplaced objects (Sensor Towers, Plasma Turrets) without assistance. (Lesser weapons such as the Plasma Gun and Grenade Launcher also work. But this requires multiple perfect shots in a row from very close range, which is hard to do when you're being shot at.)

The Heavy Mortar's primary use is to level heavy, emplaced objects and clear out bases, either with or without the help of a Targeting Laser. You can also use it against individual human targets at long range. You need to be extremely skilled to destroy moving enemies with a Heavy Mortar—assuming that they're actively dodging, of course. But it can be done. It's just a question of getting to know the Mortar well enough to accurately shell a spot without the help of the Targeting Laser. You also have to guess where the enemy will be in a second or two. The Heavy Mortar's wide blast radius helps with this task, giving you occasional cheap kills even if your aim isn't the greatest.

If you decide to shoot close-range enemies with the Heavy Mortar, aim slightly above your target. You'll find that shells fired at nearby targets tend to stick on the ground where they land. So you needn't worry about the unpredictable bouncing associated with Grenades. However, like Grenades, Heavy Mortar shells have a short "arming" period after they're fired. So you'll need to wait a second or two before the shell actually explodes if you shoot it at a nearby target. (If it weren't for this arming period, the Heavy Mortar would be truly unmatched as a short-range weapon. And you'd never have any reason *not* to use it.)

Since you're in Heavy Armor when you use the Mortar, and thus can absorb more abuse than many of your foes, short-range attacks can be very useful. This is especially true when you're atop a ridge or other obstacle and can quickly drop away to shield yourself from the blast.

It takes as much practice to learn how to kill enemies at close range with Mortar shells as it does at long range. Keep trying and keep observing. You'll find the Heavy Mortar incredibly potent at any range.

Attacking an enemy at extremely close range with the Heavy Mortar is dangerous because you're likely to take serious damage from the blast. However, sometimes you'll want to do this. If you're atop a ridge, for example, you could plant a shell on one side of the ridge and then drop off the other side. You'll escape the worst of the damage and perhaps take out your opponent. Or if a Light Armored foe is about to grab your flag inside your base, you might want to bite the bullet. Just plant a shell in the floor and endure some damage since it hurts both you and your enemy.

When a teammate uses the Targeting Laser, a line extends up from the target. A pair of triangles dot this line. Fire at either triangle to hit the target; the lower triangle is a "low trajectory" path, while the higher one indicates a "high trajectory" path.

The lower path may be dangerous if you don't have a clear shot. The high path is seldom risky, but your shells will take longer to reach their destination.

The most accurate way to shoot a target is to center the crosshair with the lower tip of the triangle.

Figure 2-12. The Targeting Laser helps your teammates use their Heavy Mortars.

Targeting Laser
Shots to Kill: n/a
Ammo: Infinite/Infinite/Infinite

The Targeting Laser is meant to be used as an adjunct to the Heavy Mortar. Point at a target and hold down the trigger, and teammates with Heavy Mortars will see targeting triangles appear in the sky. The Targeting Laser can be used with the Grenade Launcher as well.

Other teammates can also see the Targeting Laser, but without the Mortar, it doesn't do them much good. The main benefit to these teammates is that they c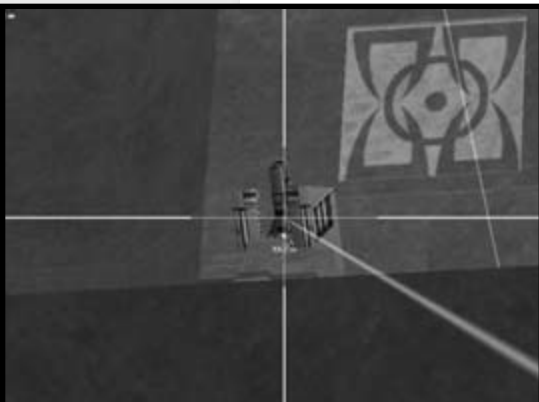an see the areas that are soon to be shelled. They can then either avoid them or chip in to help the attack with lesser weapons.

The Targeting Laser is only valuable in specific situations. If nobody's in position with a Heavy Mortar to capitalize on your helpful targeting, it all goes to waste. Plus, the laser is clearly visible to everyone, so your enemies will eventually see it and return fire. This presents problems if you're trying to hold steady and present a nice target for your teammates.

Also, extremely good Mortar-wielders can often shoot a target without any help. Keep in mind though, that the Targeting Laser can help even the most skilled player use the Mortar at extreme range.

> *Since the Targeting Laser doesn't occupy a true weapon slot, you should always carry one. There's no reason not to. Then, if you happen to be in position to help a teammate with a Mortar deal some damage, you'll be prepared.*

If you aren't positive you'll get Mortar support, though, think twice before targeting an enemy. It tends to give away your position. If you can get a clean, steady shot—especially on a stationary human player—you're sometimes better off using the Laser Rifle or Blaster instead.

Mines

Mines to Kill: 1 vs. Light, 2 vs. Medium, 3 vs. Heavy
Ammo: 3/3/3

Mines are potent weapons if you use them correctly. They can also be a threat to your own team. The key is to use them judiciously and let everyone know where you put them.

Mines take a moment to arm themselves, during which time they automatically drill themselves into the ground. Be sure to get away as they do this because once they become active, they don't distinguish between friend and foe. They just detonate when someone steps too close, dealing massive damage. If a Light Armor lands directly on a mine, he will die.

The most common use of mines is to plant them around a flag you wish to defend. You should confine the mining to very clearly defined areas. If you sprinkle them around your base, seemingly at random, your teammates will be the most likely victims. Tell your team when you're mining, and make it clear where you're dropping the mines.

Figure 2-13. Mines automatically burrow into the ground, just seconds after you drop them.

Mines are hard to use in combat situations, mainly because your opponent tends to see you drop them. If you're particularly clever though, and your opponent doesn't see you drop them, you can place a couple in mid-fight and try to lure your opponent over them.
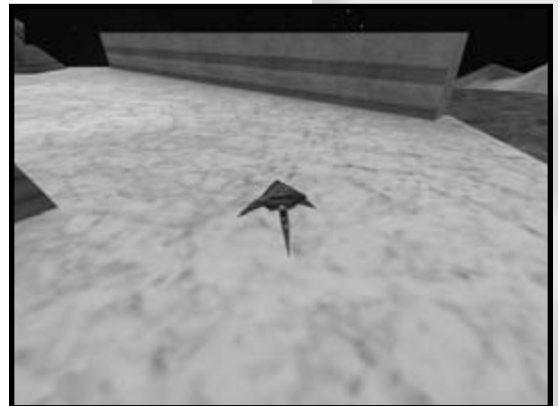
Grenades

Shots to Kill: 2 vs. Light, 2 vs. Medium, 5 vs. Heavy
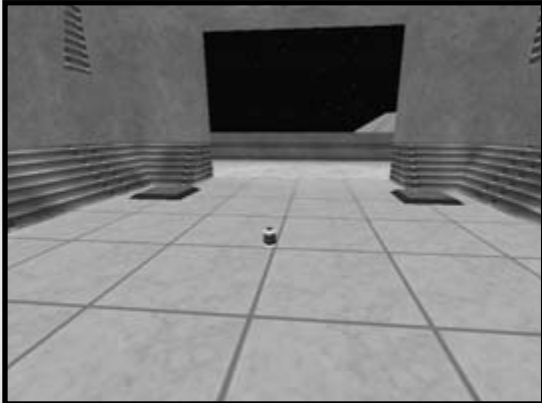*Ammo: 5/6/8*

Figure 2-14. Hold down the button longer to deliver Grenades at longer distances.

Grenades are similar to those lobbed by a Grenade Launcher, save that they're fractionally less potent, and they don't have the same long-range delivery. Instead, they're tossed a few feet in front of you—more or less depending on how long you hold down the button before releasing it.

Grenades can be used to supplement your standard weapons, but it's awfully hard to keep track of anything but your primary weapon in combat. Instead, you'll probably find yourself using them most often in cat-and-mouse situations. These occur when you and an opponent are fighting in an enclosed area, such as a base. In such cases, you can often flush out the enemy (or deal some damage) with a Grenade. Just slip one around a corner, down a hole, or into the middle of a room you suspect your enemy is standing in.

In-Depth Weapon Comparison

We'll end the chapter with some hard numbers on weapon damage. These come in the form of four tables, which we'll explain in a moment.

Included in these tables are damage ratings for turrets, and for the rockets fired from the Scout Flier. Read these tables to get a sense of how much damage each weapon does, and how protective each armor type is against various weapon types.

Basic Damage

The following table shows basic damage for each weapon. Basic damage is sort of a "raw damage" number that indicates the overall power of the weapon. It's expressed as a percentage. So for example, the Disk Launcher has a basic damage rating of 50 percent. That means that a direct disk hit will take away 50 percent of some enemies' health.

Basic damage doesn't tell the whole story, however. Keep reading, and you'll find that different armor types absorb different amounts of damage.

Table 2-1. Basic Damage

WEAPON	BASIC DAMAGE %
Mortar Turret	132
Mortar	100
Flyer Rocket	50
Missile Turret	50
Disk Launcher	50
Grenade	40
Plasma Gun	45
Laser Rifle	42
Fusion Turret	25
Chaingun	11
Remote Turret	10
Blaster	12
ELF Turret (Seconds)	6
ELF (Seconds)	4

Note that most weapons' damage drops off at long range. In particular, energy weapons like the Plasma Gun and the Fusion Turret become extremely weak at extreme range. The Laser Rifle is one of the few weapons that doesn't have any long-range penalties.

Also, note that you'll score extra damage if you hit an enemy in the head with the Laser Rifle—approximately 50 percent more. This isn't true of other weapons, so don't bother going for tricky head shots when using them.

Armor Modifiers

A weapon's basic damage doesn't tell the whole story. Different armor types absorb different amounts of damage.

Generally speaking, heavier armor absorbs more damage than lighter armor. Refer to the following table to see what percentage of each weapon's basic damage gets through each type of armor.

Table 2-2. Armor Modifiers

WEAPON	LIGHT %	MEDIUM %	HEAVY %
Blaster	130	100	70
Remote Turret	130	100	70
Fusion Turret	130	100	70
Mortar	130	100	70
Mortar Turret	130	100	70
Grenade	120	100	80
Chaingun	120	100	60
Plasma Gun	100	100	80
Disk Launcher	100	100	60
Flyer Rocket	100	100	60
Missile Turret	100	100	60
ELF (Seconds)	100	100	100
ELF Turret (Seconds)	100	100	100
Laser	100	100	60

Modified Damage Percentage

If you take each weapon's basic damage and modify it by each armor type's armor modifier, and divide into the base damage for each armor, you get Modified Damage Percentage. This is the truest measure of a weapon's damage, showing exactly what percentage of a player's health is taken away with a direct shot from each weapon.

Table 2-3. Modified Damage Percentage

WEAPON	LIGHT %	MEDIUM %	HEAVY %
Mortar Turret	260	132	70
Mortar	196	100	53
Disk Launcher	75	50	22
Flyer Rocket	75	50	22
Missile Turret	75	50	22
Grenade	72	50	24
Plasma Gun	68	45	27
Laser Rifle*	63(95)	42(63)	19(28)
Fusion Turret	49	25	13
Blaster	25	10	6
Remote Turret	20	10	5
Chaingun	20	11	5
ELF Turret (Seconds)	6	6	6
ELF (Seconds)	4	4	4

*Damage in parenthesis refers to head shots.

Shots to Kill

Our last table is Accurate Shots to Kill an Enemy. This is merely another way of presenting the data from the Modified Damage Percentage table, showing how many perfect shots it takes to kill an enemy with each weapon.

As always, bear in mind that indirect shots deal less damage than direct hits, and head shots do extra damage when using a Laser Rifle. Also, note that players can use all sorts of tools (such as Shield Packs, Repair Packs and Repair Kits) to heal themselves in midbattle. So you can't always

count on killing an enemy in the exact number of shots listed here.

Table 2-4. Accurate Shots to Kill an Enemy

WEAPON	LIGHT	MEDIUM	HEAVY
Chaingun	5	9	20
Fusion Turret	3	4	8
Remote Turret	5	10	20
Blaster	4	10	17
Plasma Gun	2	3	4
Disk Launcher	2	2	5
Grenade	2	2	5
Mortar	1	1	2
Mortar Turret	1	2	2
Flyer Rocket	2	2	5
Missile Turret	2	2	5
ELF (Seconds)	25	25	25
ELF Turret (Seconds)	16.67	16.67	16.67
Laser Rifle*	2(2)	3(2)	6(4)

*Damage in parenthesis refers to head shots.

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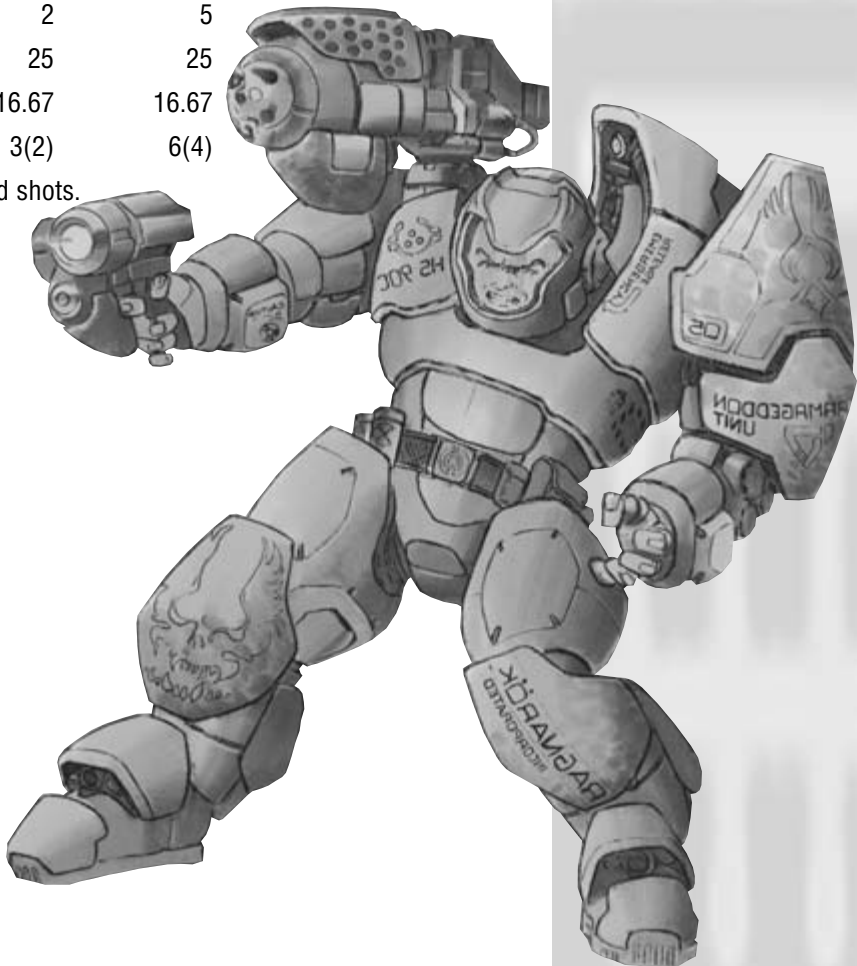
Packs & Items

Armor and weapons aren't the only items you can wear or carry in *Tribes*. Players can also wear packs, which provide a vast array of benefits. Also, each player can carry a limited number of miscellaneous items, which perform useful support functions.

Never underestimate the value of packs and miscellaneous items. Though they may not initially seem as crucial as armor and weapons, these items often mean the difference between life and death.

Packs

You can wear exactly one pack at any given time. Assuming that you're playing a mission where Inventory Stations are readily available, there's absolutely no reason *not* to be wearing a pack at all times. They're so useful that you'll be at a huge disadvantage without one.

Just as you should select appropriate armor and weapons, you should select a pack that'll make a direct impact on your ability to achieve your goal.

Permanents

Permanent packs are worn until you get killed, drop them, or buy a different pack. They never get "used up." However, packs that derive power from your armor's energy cell will turn themselves off automatically when the power runs out.

Some packs are constantly in effect while others need to be turned on when you want to use them.

AMMO PACK

The Ammo Pack increases the total amount of ammo you can carry. It requires no energy to operate. If you drop the pack, excess ammo is dropped as well.

The Ammo Pack is a poor choice if you're using lots of weapons that operate on energy, such as the Blaster, ELF Gun, and Laser Rifle. Also, it's not typically a pack you'll want to select if you're wearing Light Armor. This

is because you probably won't need tons of ammo if you're in Light Armor. And you're likely to bene-fit more from an Energy Pack or a Jammer Pack.

However, the Ammo Pack really comes into its own if you're in Heavy Armor and wielding a Heavy Mortar. This weapon is unbelievably powerful but short on ammo, so any extra ammo you can carry will make it that much more potent.

Even if you don't have a Heavy Mortar, the Ammo Pack can be valuable. Use it in situations where you anticipate a great need for ammo (e.g. perhaps you're going to shell a base with tons of Grenades). But only do so if you won't benefit more from a different pack.

ENERGY PACK

The Energy Pack increases the recharge rate of your armor's energy cell. It can benefit any armor type because it allows players to use their jump jets more often. Thus, they can traverse difficult terrain with greater mobility and elusiveness.

The Energy Pack is required if you want to use the Laser Rifle. The Energy Pack also makes Light Armor super-maneuverable. Therefore, Light Armor wearers are the most common users of the Energy Pack. But again, any armor type can benefit from the added mobil-ity of the Energy Pack.

Energy weapons like the Laser Rifle or the Blaster benefit greatly from the Energy Pack, because the faster your energy recharges, the faster you can fire. Be sure to take at least one energy weapon so you can capitalize on the increased rate of fire allowed by the Energy Pack.

Most often, you'll find yourself using the Energy Pack when you're playing the role of sniper or base raider. As a sniper, you'll need the Energy Pack for the Laser Rifle. As a base raider, you can use it to speed your entrance and getaway. You'll also enjoy the ability to jump higher than usual, often allowing you to enter bases from heights that would otherwise be impossible.

Fig. 3-1. Energy Packs enable you to use the Laser Rifle and to jump extremely high.

Be sure to switch to a non-energy weapon if you want to stay mobile in combat. Even with the Energy Pack, using a Blaster or Laser Rifle in combat leaves you with very little energy left for jumping.

SHIELD PACK

The Shield Pack absorbs damage, but at a cost of energy. It slowly drains your energy supply while active, so you can't leave it on indefinitely. Also, each hit absorbed by the Shield Pack drains extra energy, so the more you get shot, the faster it'll turn itself off.

The Shield Pack can help anyone absorb more damage, but it tends to be most useful to players in Heavy Armor. This is because players in Light and Medium Armor are much more likely to do lots of jetting during combat. This reduces the energy available to power the

Fig. 3-2. This Heavy Armor wearer has an active Shield Pack. You can tell because the Shield glimmers faintly whenever he's hit.

Shield. Players in Heavy Armor don't benefit as much from jetting extensively in combat—after all, they can only get a few meters off the ground. So it's often better to just ignore the jets and use the Shields to absorb damage.

Also, the Shield Pack is at its best in enclosed areas, which is where players in Heavy Armor are likely to spend the most time. That's because maneuverability is limited indoors, and you can't always avoid damage. So it's better to just absorb damage with the Shield Pack than to try to avoid it.

JAMMER PACK

The Jammer Pack is a powerful tool in the right hands. When activated, it blocks you from enemy Pulse Sensors. And avoiding detection by the enemy is key to success in *Tribes*. If you *are* detected, you'll appear on enemy Commander Screens, and a red triangle will appear over your head on enemy HUDs. So you'll be marked as an easy target.

The Jammer Pack hides you from Pulse Sensors and Remote Pulse Sensors. But it cannot shield you from Motion Detectors, Cameras, and visual detection by enemy players. The pack doesn't make you invisible, therefore. But since Pulse Sensors affect a vast area and are the most commonly used sensors, you'll be much less noticeable when wearing this pack.

The Jammer Pack can be used effectively by any armor type, but Light Armor is the most common user. (It's hard to be stealthy in Heavy Armor!) A player in

Fig. 3-3. This Remote Turret won't shoot at the player because he's currently using a Sensor Jammer Pack.

Light Armor can hide behind terrain features, then use the Jammer Pack when crossing areas where he or she is exposed to radar. Then that player can use the Light Armor's speed to quickly infiltrate the enemy base.

The question you must ask yourself before taking the Jammer Pack is, "Do I need this thing?" The answer depends on the map and the sort of defenses you're facing. If the enemy base is riddled with turrets, and there's not much cover leading up to it, then yes, you should have the Jammer Pack. On the other hand, if the enemy base has lots of hilly terrain around it, you can often sneak up without the Jammer Pack. Also, if your target has lots of vigilant human defenders, you'll probably be seen despite the pack.

> *It's important to understand that pure stealth will only get you so far. Once you've grabbed the enemy flag or started to destroy parts of the enemy base, you'll be detected regardless of the Jammer Pack. If you think you can make it to the base without the jammer, you might be better off with an Energy Pack. That way, you can beat a hasty retreat once you're detected.*

REPAIR PACK

It's tempting to take a Repair Pack all the time. The lure of constant repairs, after all, is strong: Nobody wants to run back to base every time they get shot up. And indeed, the Repair Pack is a solid choice for any armor type. It allows you to repair yourself, or a teammate, between battles. And it also allows you to repair turrets, sensors, and other crucial objects.

Fig. 3-4. The Repair Pack can be used to repair damaged objects and teammates, as well as simply heal yourself.

Bear in mind, though, that the Repair Pack doesn't help you much *during* a battle unless you're fighting an enemy who's slower than you. Then you can effectively run away while healing yourself. Usually, healing yourself in midbattle is tempting but a bad idea: The minute you stop returning fire, you stop pressing your opponent, and he or she will get better shots at you.

The Repair Pack is more useful in heavier armor since you're more likely to take serious damage but still survive a combat in Heavy Armor. In Light Armor, you should instead strive to avoid being damaged in the first place.

If you're in a large group, it's great if at least one player has a Repair Pack and can heal the others when they're injured.

Also, take the Repair Pack if you suspect you'll need to fix turrets or other useful objects.

Deployables

Deployables provide no benefit until they're dropped on the ground. Then they become something useful: A Remote Inventory Station, a Remote Pulse Sensor, a Remote Jammer…you name it.

The beginner often dismisses the power of deployables, instead favoring the boost to combat ability provided by permanents. But deployables are used to build an infrastructure of Inventory Stations, sensors, and turrets that aids your entire team. These items are extremely powerful! Don't dismiss them.
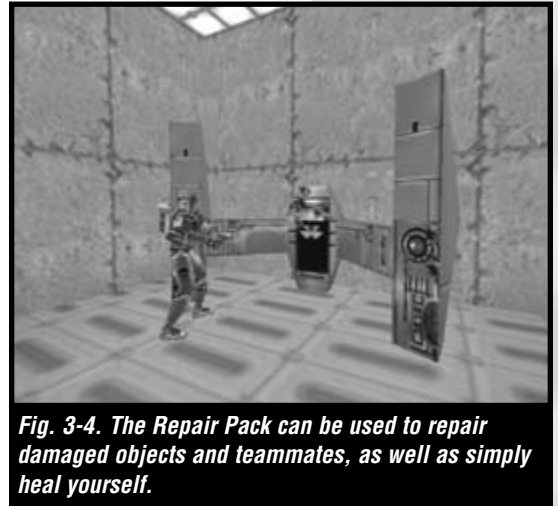
REMOTE PULSE SENSOR

The more you play the game, the more you'll realize how important your team's sensor network is. There are too many players in the average game for you to just *guess* where they all are. So you'll rely on the sensor network to give you clues about where enemies are located and what they're up to.

The Remote Pulse Sensor extends your team's sensor range. Like all Pulse Sensors, it works on a line-of-sight basis. So a Remote Pulse Sensor placed on the crest of a hill will see much more of the terrain than one placed deep in a valley. Of course, a Remote Pulse Sensor is more likely to be seen and destroyed on a hilltop than in a valley. Therefore, you must strike a balance between visibility and effectiveness.

You can see the radius of effect of a Remote Pulse Sensor by looking at the map in the Commander Screen. Bear in mind that Remote Pulse Sensors are subject to jamming just like big Pulse Sensors, so there may be unseen enemies within that radius. These enemies may be using jammers, or they may be hidden behind terrain features so the Remote Pulse Sensor can't see them.

The bottom line is that it's extremely valuable to have a network of sensors scattered across the map. And the Remote Pulse Sensor, with its wide area of detection, is the best choice for covering vast tracts of ground.

REMOTE MOTION SENSOR

The Remote Motion Sensor, like a Remote Pulse Sensor, detects enemies and adds them to your team's sensor network.

The Remote Motion Sensor has a much smaller effective radius than the Remote Pulse Sensor, and it cannot detect enemies that are perfectly stationary. They must be moving to be seen.

Despite these drawbacks, the Motion Sensor has several qualities that make it absolutely invaluable. First, unlike a Pulse Sensor, the Motion Sensor *cannot be jammed.* Furthermore, the Motion sensor does not need a line of sight with the target to "see" it. So you can put it next to a wall, and it will "see" an enemy that's on the other side of the wall. Remember, though, the enemy must be within its effective radius.

The value of these qualities can't be overstated. Since Remote Motion Sensors can't be jammed, you can use them to protect any area from enemies trying to use jammers and stealth tactics. Furthermore, since they can see through walls, hills, ceilings, and floors, you can stick them in small nooks and crannies. There, the enemy is unlikely to see them—and thus, unlikely to destroy them.

Because of the Remote Motion Sensor's small effective radius, you probably won't have enough time to cover the map with them. Instead of using them to blanket the map (which is a job for Remote Pulse Sensors), you should place them in highly important locales. Put them near your base, near turrets, and near crucial spots such as towers.

Fig. 3-5. Since Remote Motion Sensors can see through walls and other obstacles, you can place them in highly shielded areas.

Place a Remote Motion Sensor near a Plasma Turret or any other emplaced defense. Enemies with Sensor Jammer Packs will often decide to walk right past the turret, thinking that their pack will prevent the turret from seeing them. But the Motion Sensor will pick them up, and the turret will hose them down.

REMOTE JAMMER

The Remote Jammer is an anti-sensor device. Deploy it, and it'll blanket a small radius with anti-Pulse Sensor protection. This protection depends on line-of-sight, so you can't place a Remote Jammer on one side of a hill and expect it to protect something on the other side.

Like Jammer Packs, Remote Jammers offer protection from Pulse Sensors, but not from Remote Motion Sensors, Cameras, or visual detection.

Since Remote Jammers don't appear on the enemy's sensor network unless an enemy visually spots them, they're largely invisible. Often, the enemies won't have any idea that there's a jammer somewhere inside their sensor range, interfering with their ability to detect enemies.

Fig. 3-6. Remote Jammers are often used to conceal Remote Inventory Stations secretly placed near enemy bases.

You might want to consider laying a few Remote Jammers in key locations, rather than always wearing a Jammer Pack. If you get enough Remote Jammers placed, you can enjoy the benefits of jamming and still be free to carry a different pack—one that'll help you with combat.

REMOTE TURRET

Remote Turrets (also known as Claptraps) are fragile and have limited range, but they deal great damage quickly. And they have a built-in, short-range Pulse Sensor that lets them fire automatically at any enemy who gets too close.

Only players wearing Medium or Heavy Armor can carry the Remote Turret. When they do, they'll notice a significant difference in their speed and jumping ability. The Turret is heavy and tends to weigh players down. The Remote Inventory Station is the only other pack that weighs this much.

Fig. 3-7. Once they lock onto you, Remote Turrets will finish you off quickly.

Remote Turrets generate an interference field, so there's a limit to how many you can place in a given area. You'll find that you're forced to spread them out somewhat.

A wide network of Remote Turrets and various sensors makes your base awfully hard to attack. Also, Remote Turrets placed out in the open or at clever places inside a base can lay unsuspecting enemies low very quickly.

It's strongly recommended that you use Remote Turrets to defend crucial areas, including your base. Later chapters provide detailed advice on getting the most out of these important items.

Remote Camera

The Remote Camera only detects enemies within a small range, and it must be pointed more or less toward those enemies to see them. This makes it a poor substitute for Remote Pulse Sensors if you're trying to cover a large outdoor area. However, the Remote Camera has certain unique benefits.

First, the Remote Camera cannot be jammed. Also, unlike a Motion Sensor, the Remote Camera can see a player regardless of whether he or she is moving. Add these two qualities up, and you'll realize that the Remote Camera *cannot be foiled*. If a player gets close enough, and the Camera is pointing in the right direction, it will always see and add the player to the sensor network.

Also, unlike other sensors, Remote Cameras can—and should—be stuck onto any surface. Ceilings, walls, and sheer slopes can all hold Remote Cameras. This allows you to place them in spots where enemies aren't likely to see and destroy them. Whenever possible, you should jet up to the ceiling and stick cameras up there, where they're almost never noticed.

Finally, Cameras can be controlled from the Controllable Objects List of the Commander Screen. Just select a Camera from this list. Then you can look through its eyes, rotating it to a new direction and even zooming in with the Image Enhancer.

The best places to position Cameras are inside bases, on high vantage points, and near turrets. Cameras in friendly bases are ideal for spotting enemies for turrets. Cameras in enemy bases allow you to see exactly what the enemy is up to. And Cameras on tall vantage points allow you to see what's going on in remote parts of the map. Just take a second to access them from the Commander Screen.

Fig. 3-8. Place Remote Cameras on walls and ceilings where your enemies will never suspect them.

After placing a Camera, be sure to access it from the Commander Screen and rotate its view until it's looking in the direction you want. For example, aim it down a hallway that enemies tend to enter your base through. Then, return to the Commander Screen or your HUD view. The Camera will stay focused in the direction you left it.

REMOTE INVENTORY AND AMMO STATIONS

These deployables can only be carried by a Tribesman in Medium or Heavy Armor. As with Remote Turrets, the Remote Inventory Pack is so heavy that it affects jumping ability and maneuverability when carried. The Remote Ammo Station confers no such penalty.

When deployed, these packs create miniature versions of full-sized Inventory and Ammo Stations. There are two main differences between these packs and their full-sized counterparts, however. These stations have limited energy (and thus will run dry after enough purchases). And you can't purchase armor from Remote Inventory Stations—you need to visit a full-sized station for that.

Remote Inventory Stations are among the most crucial items in the game while Remote Ammo Stations are useful but limited. Remote Inventory Stations are usually preferable. Not only do they provide weapons, packs, and miscellaneous items, but they also restore players' health (something the Ammo Stations can't do). *And* they can replenish ammo just like a Remote Ammo Station. If you're going to go through the trouble of lugging a Remote Station out into the field, therefore, make it an Inventory Station. Only use a Remote Ammo Station if you physically can't get where you want to go with a Remote Inventory Station. Or if you need to get

Fig. 3-9. Remote Inventory Stations are crucial to efficient play.

somewhere faster than the Remote Inventory Station will allow, use a Remote Ammo Station instead.

Think of Remote Inventory Stations as miniature bases. They can be used to supplement full-sized Inventory Stations in bases where Inventory Stations are in short supply. And they can be dropped anywhere to create an instant staging area for attack on enemy territory. We'll discuss them at length in later chapters.

For now, just be aware that great players often make heavy use of Remote Inventory Stations.

Miscellaneous Items

Miscellaneous items cover a wide range of functions. All miscellaneous items, save for the Repair Patch, may be purchased at an Inventory Station. You can carry a finite number of miscellaneous items, but carrying one doesn't prevent you from taking another. For example, you can carry a Repair Kit *and* your maximum load of Target Beacons, *and* your maximum load of Mines and Grenades.

There's no good reason not to take *all* available miscellaneous items every time you visit an Inventory Station. They're cheap, they can be carried in addition to weapons and packs, and they sometimes come in handy. Make them a part of your Favorites list.

Repair Patch

Repair Patches cannot be purchased or carried. They're found lying on the ground in certain deathmatch-style missions. Just run across them to restore a percentage of your armor.

Repair Kit

Repair Kits are available at Inventory Stations, though you can only carry one at a time. Like the Repair Patch, the Repair Kit fixes a percentage of your armor.

Always carry a Repair Kit if possible, and get into the habit of automatically pressing the key to activate it whenever you've taken significant damage. Beginners often forget to use their Repair Kits. This not only makes them easier to kill, but their opponents get to collect their unused Repair Kits from the ground after killing them! Don't let this happen to you. Always carry a Repair Kit, and always use it.

Target Beacons

Target Beacons create a target for your teammates, much as a Targeting Laser does. These items are often overlooked, but are actually quite powerful. You have to actually be next to the target in order to use the Beacon effectively, which often requires you to enter a highly risky area. However, there's a real benefit to being able to paint a target with a Beacon and then immediately run away. It's better than standing in place for a prolonged period of time, pointing the Targeting Laser at your objective, and hoping you don't get shot.

Learn to drop Target Beacons near enemy fortifications to take them out quickly, and in enemy bases—especially if you're about to get killed anyway. But be sure to clear out after dropping them because standing near a Beacon you've just dropped is a recipe for disaster.

Fig. 3-10. Target Beacons present teammates with the same visual information as a Targeting Laser.

Target Beacons are fragile, so don't expect them to stick around. They get destroyed after being hit with a single mortar shell—or even a single shot from a lesser weapon.

Grenades and Mines

We discussed Grenades and Mines in Chapter 2, but they're counted as miscellaneous items as far as inventory is concerned. That means you can carry them around for "free," and they don't take up room that's reserved for other weapons. Be sure to buy them whenever you visit an Inventory Station!

Summary

It'll take time for you to learn how to get the most out of packs and miscellaneous items. Be sure to experiment with different packs in different situations. And try to remember to use Mines and Grenades to supplement your already formidable arsenal.

Both packs and miscellaneous items can give you a tremendous boost if you use them properly. It's often enough of a boost to move you from mediocrity to excellence.

4

Turrets, Sensors, and Vehicles

The *Tribes* landscape is dotted with significant features. Understanding these features is absolutely vital to becoming a good player. You need to know how a Pulse Sensor works, how damaging a Fusion Turret is, and what causes a Missile Turret to fire at you. Otherwise, you're going to have a rough, confusing, and frustrating experience.

This chapter discusses turrets, sensors, vehicles—essentially, anything that isn't a player or an inactive part of the landscape. Instead of organizing features by category, you'll find them organized by where you'll find them, either outdoors or indoors. A small section at the chapter's end discusses vehicles separately as they require a bit of extra explanation.

Exterior Features

The great outdoors is a dangerous place in *Tribes*. It's virtually crawling with enemies, some obvious and some not so obvious. A key to survival is to understand the non-human threats you'll encounter, so you won't be constantly laid low by forces beyond your comprehension.

Note that we aren't covering *everything* located outdoors in the following pages—just mechanical and electronic threats. Furthermore, note that certain packs can be deployed both outside and inside, and you'll encounter them frequently, in addition to the threats mentioned here. Refer back to Chapter 3 for more information on these objects, which are often just miniature versions of the features discussed in this chapter.

Base

Though a base isn't so much an object as a collection of objects, we'll discuss bases here because they're so important to the game.

A base is simply a collection of fortifications and resources. For example, the typical base is a walled or enclosed structure that possesses several turrets for defense. It offers crucial resources such as Inventory Stations, Command Stations, and Ammo Stations. It possesses one or more entrances, but if those entrances are properly defended, a base is a tough nut to crack.

Most bases have Generators located in them. If a base has Generators, all (or most) of its mechanical assets (turrets, elevators, Pulse Sensors, Inventory Stations, etc.) are powered by those Generators. If the Generators are destroyed, the base's mechanical assets are rendered useless until they're repaired.

Your base is always vital, but in some missions, it's more vital than in others. For example, in a Capture the Flag style game, each base has a flag that must be captured. Then it must be touched to the opposing flag (also located in a base). These missions require strong base defense because the base is likely to be under constant assault.

Other missions don't emphasize bases. For example, you may have a mission where the sole object is to maintain control of three neutral towers in the middle of the map. This mission doesn't call for you to defend your base that much—those three towers are the center of attention instead.

Even if bases aren't the focal point of a mission, they're strategically important. If your base gets invaded and destroyed, your team will have to waste valuable time and effort on repairs. This is extremely distracting. Therefore, it's always a good idea to defend your base.

If you happen upon an enemy base, be advised that you usually can't just rush in, commando-style, and wreck it. You'll have to employ cunning stealth tactics, blazing speed, or massive firepower to deal significant harm to a base. This usually means attacking with friends.

Fig. 4-1. Bases come in a variety of different shapes and sizes. Some of them, like this one, even float.

Tower

Towers are usually neutral. That means there's a square, rotating "trigger" block in the center that any team member can touch, thus claiming the tower for his or
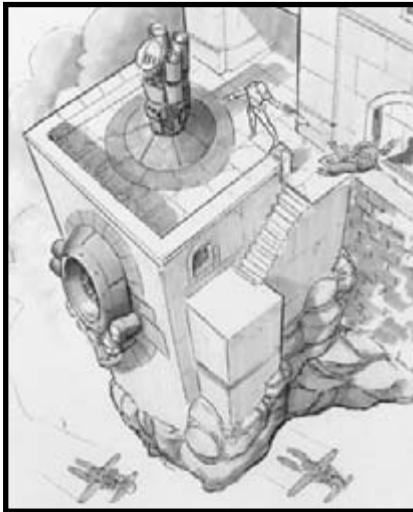

Fig. 4-2. Towers, like bases, come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Towers usually have a "trigger" block that you can touch to claim them for your team.

her team. Control of towers can change hands many times during a mission. (Some towers in certain missions don't have a trigger block; like bases, they belong to one side or the other.)

When teammates are killed, they tend to reappear near your team's base. Since towers are usually considered neutral, teammates won't often reappear there.

> *Towers don't always look like towers. Some towers, for example, look more like dugouts or bunkers.*
> *When we use the term "tower," we're referring to any fortified outpost, with turrets or other useful features that can change hands during a mission.*

While typically smaller and less fortified than bases, towers sometimes possess the same amenities, such as Inventory Stations and various turrets. However, towers are usually located in territory that's "up for grabs." Towers do act as respawn points for the team that owns them.

When a team takes control of a tower, it takes control of the tower's turrets, stations, and other amenities. This often poses a challenge: When taking control of an enemy tower, should you leave its assets intact, preserving them for your team's later use? Or should you destroy them so that your attack on the tower is easier? The former technique makes the tower easier to defend from counterattack. But it makes your assault on the tower that much more difficult. The latter technique is sometimes the only way to proceed.

Don't bother rebuilding a tower's defenses unless you plan to keep enough teammates around to defend it. There's nothing worse than fully repairing a tower, only to have it fall to the enemy.

Pulse Sensor

Fig. 4-3. Pulse Sensors are crucial resources. If they're knocked out, it's hard to figure out where the enemy is.

Pulse Sensors are your team's primary sensors. They're big, rotating dishes that cover a vast radius with their radar-like vision. Enemies and enemy objects in the Pulse Sensor's field of view are added to your team's sensor network.

Pulse Sensors operate on line-of-sight and thus cannot "see" things located behind walls or ridges. If you're ever in doubt as to whether a Pulse Sensor can see you, just think of it as a big set of eyes. If you're in a position where you can see it, and you're within its effective range, then it can assuredly see you. If you can't see it, then it probably can't see you either. Use the sensor indicator on the HUD. Red means you've been spotted, and green means you have not been spotted.

You should always try to keep your team's Pulse Sensors in good repair. In addition to letting your teammates see enemy positions, Pulse Sensors help your turrets see enemies. (More on this later, in Chapter 6.)

Like turrets, Pulse Sensors have a built-in energy supply that's constantly being replenished. This energy supply is just like the energy cell built into every player's armor. Whereas a suit of armor's energy cell powers jump jets and certain weapons, the Pulse Sensor's energy goes into Shields. To destroy the Pulse Sensor, you need to knock down those Shields first.

If you fire at a Pulse Sensor that has active Shields, you'll see a brief flash as your weapon fire hits them. Your weapons deal absolutely no damage to a Pulse Sensor until its Shields are knocked down. Unfortunately for you, those Shields replenish themselves at a very fast rate. In fact, unloading your weapon into a Pulse Sensor as quickly as possible probably won't wear down the Shields enough to do any damage.

There are two answers to this dilemma. Fire at the Pulse Sensor with a weapon strong enough to destroy it (Heavy Mortar, preferably, though the Plasma Gun and Grenade Launcher can do the job). Or have multiple teammates fire at it simultaneously (the ELF Gun is ideal for this task). Remember, though, those Shields never stop recharging! You have to destroy a Pulse Sensor with a constant stream of fire. If you fire, pause, then fire again 10 seconds later, the Shields will have completely recovered from the first shot, and you'll never get anywhere.

Once the Pulse Sensor's Shields are knocked down, it can be destroyed quickly. The only way to fix it, then, is to get close and use a Repair Pack on it.

The other way to take down a Pulse Sensor is to destroy the Generator that powers it. Be advised, however, that some maps have Pulse Sensors with Generators that you can't access. In these cases, a direct attack on the Pulse Sensor is your only recourse.

The same rule holds true for turrets: If they have visible Generators, you can destroy the Generators to temporarily disable them. If not, then you have to take out the turrets themselves to render them completely useless.

Fusion Turret

The Fusion Turret is a massive beast. It fires balls of plasma that travel slowly but pack a big punch. Get hit with a couple of these, and it's curtains for you.

The damage of the plasma, like that of almost every weapon, decreases with range.
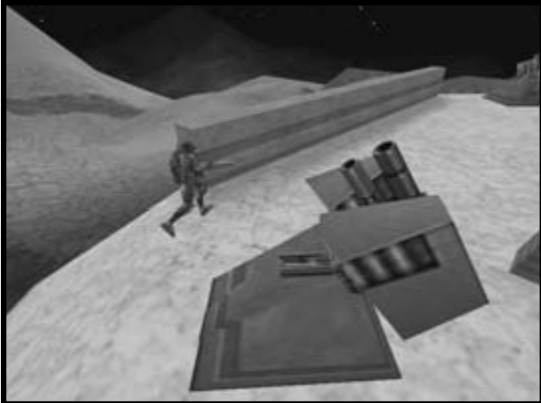
Fig. 4-4. Fusion Turrets fire projectiles that are slow but very deadly at close range.

The Fusion Turret has excellent range. Despite this fact, it only fires at enemies within a fairly limited radius—even if those targets are detected by your team's sensor network. You can rectify this shortcoming by manually taking control of the Fusion Turret with a Command Station. However, you'll find that its projectiles move slowly enough that it's very hard to hit distant, moving targets.

When should you take control of a Fusion Turret, and when should you leave it alone? The Fusion Turret doesn't always take advantage of its range. So it's sometimes to your advantage to take control of it manually if there are multiple targets hovering at long range. You probably won't kill many targets if they don't come closer, but you might catch a few off guard. And you can use the Fusion Turret to harass enemies that would otherwise plant themselves on a hilltop and shell your base with mortar fire. There's value in keeping such enemies on their toes; leave them alone, and they'll pick your base apart.

At close range, however, the Fusion Turret usually holds its own without your intervention. Whenever enemies approach the turret at close range, you're often better off allowing it to fight its own battles.

As with all turrets, you can render the Fusion Turret temporarily useless in one of three ways. The first and most direct approach is to destroy it with weapons fire. Note that the same energy that powers the Fusion Turret's Shields also powers its plasma shots. Therefore, the turret won't be able to shoot back after you've damaged it beyond a certain point. This is also true with other turrets.

The second way to disable the Fusion Turret is to destroy the Generator that powers it. Again, you should note that while some turrets have Generators, others have "implied" Generators that theoretically exist *somewhere,* but aren't accessible. For these turrets, cutting off the power source is not an option.

ELF Turret

The ELF Turret works like a larger version of the Electron Flux Gun. It sucks energy out of its target while dealing moderate damage. This Turret can't always be counted on to kill enemies. But it does render them incapable of using Jump Jets or other energy-based devices for a short time, leaving them vulnerable to defenders.

The ELF Turret is a short-range weapon, and it's highly effective within that range. There's usually little value in taking control of this type of turret as it does a good job all by itself.

You can destroy or evade the ELF Turret using the methods outlined under Fusion Turret: Destroy the ELF Turret directly, destroy a Generator powering it, or simply stay off the enemy sensor network.

Fig. 4-5. The ELF Turret sucks the energy out of enemies at medium to close range and deals twice as much damage as the ELF Gun.

Missile Turret

Missile Turrets are highly unique. They fire energy-seeking missiles that deal great damage. These missiles home in on their target, so the Missile Turret is extremely accurate at long range.

With all these assets, the Missile Turret naturally has a few limitations as well. The main limitation is that it won't automatically fire at anything picked up by the sensor network. Its target must not only be visible on the sensor network, but also using jump jets, or flying in a vehicle. (Both jump jets and vehicles produce great amounts of energy, which in turn alerts the Missile Turret to enemy presence.)

Thus, while getting shot by a Missile Turret is nasty, you can walk right past an unmanned Missile Turret and it won't fire at you. Just remember not to use your jump jets or fly past it in a vehicle.

Of course, enemy players can take control of a Missile Turret with a Command Station. If this happens, they can shoot at anything, even players not using jump jets. The missiles still home in on their target, so they're extremely deadly. However, if the target is not jetting the missile tracking is less accurate.

The Missile Turret's missiles lock onto the closest

Fig. 4-6. Missile Turrets' homing missiles are extremely potent and accurate at extreme range.

energy source they're fired at, regardless of team affiliation. So it's easy for a player in manual control of a Missile Turret to kill his or her teammates. Exercise caution, and don't aim into a crowd if your teammates are amidst it.

You can destroy, disable, or evade Missile Turrets in any of the usual ways. And as we just discussed, you can avoid confrontations with Missile Turrets by staying on the ground—provided that a human player isn't manning it. Also, you can sometimes avoid a missile that's already been fired at you by dropping from the sky like a stone, or by dropping behind a ridge.

Make no mistake: Missile Turrets are a force to be reckoned with. It's often highly profitable to take manual control of them, which makes them even *more* potent.

Mortar Turret

The Mortar Turret is unique in that it never fires automatically. A player *must* take control of it and fire it manually.

The Mortar Turret is incredibly damaging; after all, it's an even bigger version of the Heavy Mortar available to Heavy Armor. It's usually found in protected spots where it doesn't have a particularly great field of view. So your teammates will have to spot enemies for it with the Targeting Laser or Target Beacons.

The Mortar Turret can easily blow itself up if you fire a shell at too low of an angle and stick it on the ground nearby. A single misfire will blow up the Mortar Turret, so be careful and fire at a reasonably high angle.

Fig. 4-7. Mortar Turrets usually aren't positioned in spots where they can see the enemy, so they must be aided with Targeting Lasers.

As with other turrets, the Mortar Turret can be blown up directly or disabled by taking out its Generator. Otherwise you can usually avoid it as it lies dormant when not manned, and it can't easily fire at targets that get too close. As with any mortar fire, the best way to avoid it is just to keep on the move.

Interior Features

The following features are generally found indoors or at the edges of bases or turrets, though exceptions do exist. Read on for a more thorough understanding of these crucial objects.

Mini-Fusion (Sentinel) Turret

The Mini-Fusion Turret, or Sentinel, fires Blaster-sized projectiles that can chew away an enemy in mere seconds. It takes a moment for the Turret to switch from its dormant state to a firing state. But once it's ready, it can hose down an enemy in no time flat.

The Sentinel is not as durable as, say, a full-sized Fusion Turret, but it can take a great deal of punishment.

Fig. 4-8. This Mini-Fusion Turret probably won't shoot if you freeze in your tracks.

There are several ways of defeating a Sentinel. The first way is to blow it up outright, preferably with Heavy Mortar shells, Grenades, or Plasma Gun shots. Another option is to destroy the Generator that powers it.

Sneaking past a Sentinel is another popular technique. First, run forward until the Sentinel pops out of its dormant state and aims at you; then immediately stop dead in your tracks. (The Sentinel "sees" you with a built-in motion sensor, but it won't shoot at you if you

aren't moving.) Wait until it goes back into its dormant state again, and then advance a few more steps. Keep repeating until you're past the Sentinel.

This technique works just fine if there aren't any other enemies in the area. If there are, however, this technique won't work. They'll hose you down with weapons fire while you're standing there like an idiot, waiting for the turret to go away. If you suspect there are enemies in the area, you either need to destroy the turret or infiltrate the base from some other direction.

Also, if there are additional sensors in the area, such as a Camera looking directly at you, it can alert the Sentinel to your position even if you stop in your tracks. In this case, stopping only gets you killed faster.

Inventory Station

Inventory Stations are perhaps the most important objects in the game. They allow your team to equip itself with the armor, weapons, and gear it needs. They're also relatively fragile, so they're an obvious target.

If you get a chance to infiltrate an enemy base, you should try to destroy everything in sight. However, if you have to be selective, take out Inventory Stations and Generators first. Inventory Stations are a choke point even under normal circumstances, amassing crowds of players lining up to use them. Destroying a few of them makes the enemy's task even harder.

Fig. 4-9. Inventory Stations are always at a premium and sometimes generate lines.

Be sure to use the Favorites option to create several sets of your favorite weapons and armor combinations. Then you can select a whole set of items at once just by pressing a single button. This allows you to get in and get out quickly. If you *don't* use Favorites, you'll cause a traffic jam, and everyone on your team will be guaranteed to hate you.

Inventory Stations also heal injured players, adding to their already immense value.

Ammo Station

Ammo stations restock players' ammo but don't provide the healing that Inventory Stations do. While this is theoretically useful, Ammo Stations are usually located inside a base, not out in the field where you really need them. Thus, Ammo Stations tend to be ignored under most circumstances.

Fig. 4-10. Ammo Stations provide a quick ammo boost.

If all you need is more ammo, visit an Ammo Station. If you need healing or need to purchase something, an Inventory Station is your best bet.

If you invade an enemy base and are looking to do some damage, ignore the Ammo Stations until you've taken out everything else.
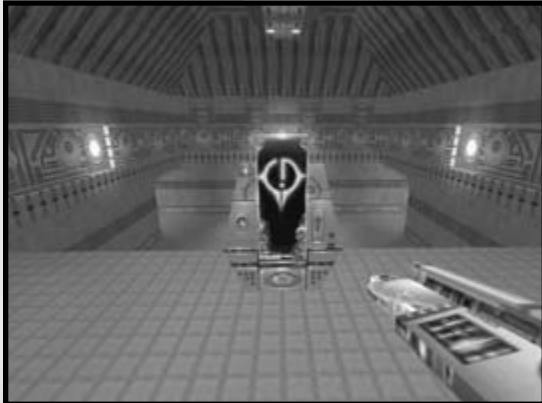
Fig. 4-11. Command Stations allow you to control turrets.

Command Station

The Command Station allows you to enter the Command Screen. From there, you can control turrets by selecting them from the Controllable Objects list.

The value of controlling turrets varies from mission to mission, and from turret to turret. Practice controlling various turrets, and you'll soon get the hang of when to control them manually and when to let them do their own thing.

Vehicle Station

The Vehicle Station is like an Inventory Station, except that you can only purchase vehicles there—no armor or weapons. Purchase a vehicle, and one will appear on a nearby launching pad.

You can't purchase a vehicle if there's already one sitting on the pad.

Try not to buy superfluous vehicles and leave them sitting on the pad; this only gets in the way of teammates who may want to buy a different sort of vehicle.

Fig. 4-12. Vehicle Stations allow you to purchase vehicles, which usually appear on a launching pad nearby.

Generators and Solar Panels

Generators are absolutely critical to bases. If you manage to sneak inside the enemy's base, destroying its Generators should be your first priority. Everything from Inventory Stations to turrets to elevators will shut down if the Generators are destroyed.

Some bases possess more than one Generator. If there's more than one, you'll usually find them side by side, so you can destroy both easily.

Also, some bases possess Solar Panels, which tend to be located on the roof. You'll have to destroy these Solar Panels in addition to Generators if you want to completely knock out the base's power.

Fig. 4-13. Generators are both crucial and fragile. A few Plasma Gun shots can take them out.
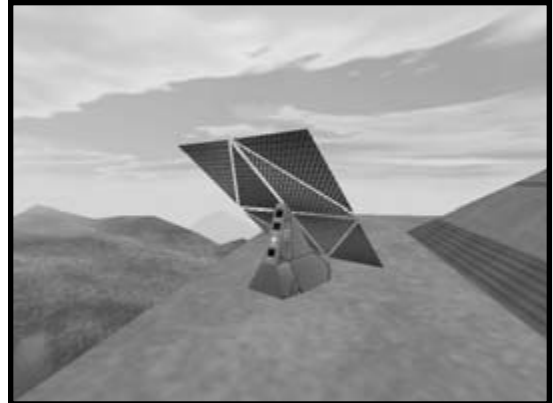
Fig. 4-14. Solar Panels are rare, but they can supplement Generators in certain missions.

Any weapon can destroy a Generator or Solar Panel, but the Plasma Gun is the weapon of choice because it's so fast and efficient.

Even though Generators are your primary targets when destroying a base, you shouldn't stop there. After destroying the Generators, move on to the Inventory Stations, Command Stations, Vehicle Stations, turrets, and finally, the Ammo Stations.

Elevators and Doors

Many bases possess elevators or doors. All work automatically; just walk to the right spot and they'll move. Of course, the power may be out, or the elevators or doors may be coded to only function for the other team. In these cases, you'll have to use your jump jets or find an alternate route.

Generally speaking, you seldom need elevators when you're in Light or Medium armor. Heavy Armor wearers, however, can benefit immensely from them.

Fig. 4-15. Elevators are a boon to players in Heavy Armor.

Vehicles

There are three types of flying vehicle in *Tribes*. Only one type is armed; the other two are purely for transportation.

If you learn to master these vehicles, you'll find that a number of possibilities open up for you.

Scout Flyer

The Scout Flyer is a small, fragile, one-man craft. It can't take much punishment, and it's highly vulnerable to Missile Turrets. However, it's so fast and agile that it's almost impossible to destroy with conventional weapons when it's moving full speed at a reasonable altitude.

Fig. 4-16. Scout Flyers take time to learn, but they're powerful in the right hands.

The Scout Flyer is the only armed vehicle in *Tribes*. It fires powerful rockets; these rockets are dumb-fired, meaning that they won't home in on a target. It takes some practice to reach the point where you can aim these rockets accurately, especially when you're flying at full speed.

As with other flying vehicles, you can make the Scout Flyer go higher by pressing the key normally used to trigger jump jets. You can make it move forward by holding down the button usually reserved for walking forward. You can also gain altitude slowly by pointing the nose of the Flyer up as you move forward.

While you may want to hold down the "up" and "forward" buttons at the same time, in reality, the Flyer won't listen to both buttons at once. Concentrate on using one button at a time. The best policy is usually to use the "up" button until you're at cruising at a respectable altitude, then move forward.

As stated previously, the Scout Flyer is a one-man craft. Like all flying craft, it can only be piloted by someone in Light Armor. Jump onto it to pilot it, and jump again to leap out.

It's easy to crash a Scout Flyer. Remember, if you get in trouble, concentrate on vertical movement rather than forward movement.

If you're being harassed by a Flyer, your options are limited; Flyers are extremely hard to shoot down with conventional weapons. Your best bet is to run to the safety of a Missile Turret; Flyers are seldom available on maps that don't have Missile Turrets. You can also just try to avoid the Flyer, or try to shoot it down if you're extremely good.

When piloting a Flyer, bear in mind that you can harass your enemies and even destroy tough ground targets with rockets. But you can't do anything decisive (like grab a flag) without disembarking.

Practice using a Scout Flyer. At first you'll be clumsy and crash prone. But in time, you'll learn how to avoid the ground and fire rockets accurately, and you'll learn that Flyers are effective weapons.

Light Personnel Carrier (LPC)

The Light Personnel Carrier can take somewhat more abuse than the Scout Flyer, and it can carry two passengers in addition to its pilot. On the downside, it isn't as fast as the Scout Flyer and possesses no weapons.

Fig. 4-17. Light Personnel Carriers are used to move players rapidly, and to keep them as a cohesive group.

The Light Personnel Carrier's main function is to get small groups of players from one side of the battlefield to the other. This is extremely valuable when you've got a mixed group including players in Heavy Armor. Heavy Armored players can take a long time to cross great distances otherwise.

If you're organized, you can employ "fly-by" tactics with the LPC, having passengers rain down Heavy Mortar and Grenade Launcher fire on targets below. This requires both skill and a good Internet connection, however. Slower modem connections might bog down to the point where aiming is difficult when flying in a vehicle.

Also, you can use the LPC as a getaway vehicle. Send a passenger in to steal a flag while you park the vehicle nearby. Then wait for the passenger to run back and hop in for a fast escape with the flag.

Heavy Personnel Carrier (HPC)

The Heavy Personnel Carrier is like a bigger, slower LPC that can carry up to four passengers in addition to the pilot. It's ideal for deep, heavy-hitting forays into enemy territory, or for gunship duties.

As with the LPC, successful use of the HPC is highly dependent on your team's ability to function as a cohesive unit. In a game where everybody's busy doing their own thing, the HPC is almost worthless.
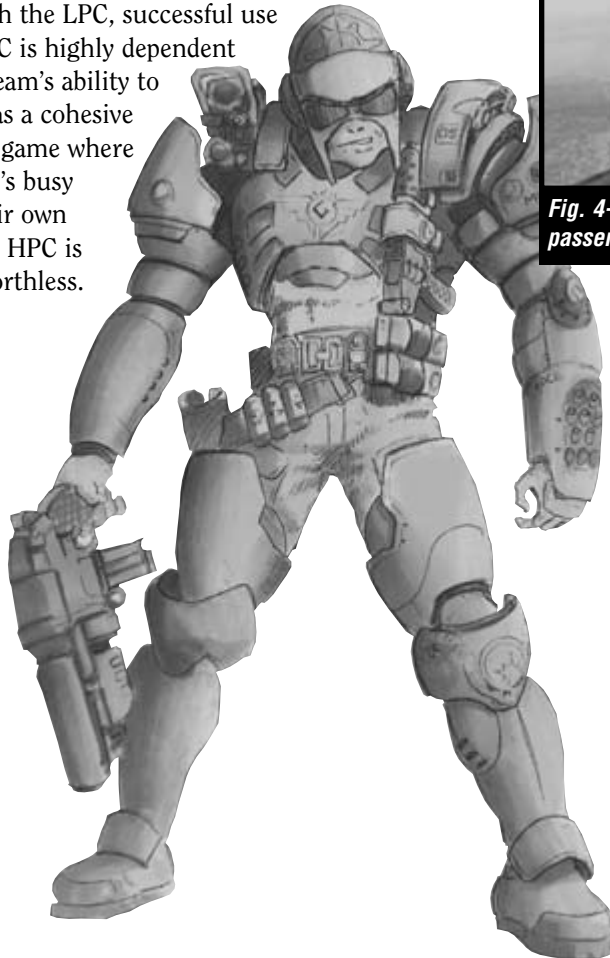
Fig. 4-18. You can use "fly-by" tactics when you're a passenger in a Heavy Personnel Carrier.

5

Combat Basics

Unfortunately, you won't become a great fighter just by reading a book. You *can* learn how to improve your tactics, and what techniques to master, but the actual reading won't take you where you want to go. Getting better takes practice, and lots of it.

This chapter explains how to get started on combat and how to improve your chances of winning. But to actually improve, you need to get in there and start fighting. Above all else, you have to observe. Players who shut off their minds as they fight won't get much out of the experience. On the other hand, players who analyze what their opponents did to beat them are likely candidates to keep improving.

Setup

The first thing to consider, before you even jump into a multiplayer game, is what controller to use and how to set it up. An inadequate controller or control scheme will put limits on your abilities. You'll find it very hard to switch to a different scheme once you've become accustomed to one. Try, therefore, to pick a good one from the start.

Choose Controllers

The mouse and keyboard combination is recommended because it's extremely versatile. The mouse provides great control, allowing you to turn quickly or slowly. The keyboard supplements the mouse, adding enough keys to let you trigger all vital combat commands.

Joysticks are generally not recommended. They tend not to offer the full range of motion and precise degree of control offered by a mouse. High-quality analog joysticks might suffice, but then again, they tend not to be nearly as precise as a mouse.

Using a mouse to control an action game might seem unnatural to you at first. But as you continue to use it, you'll grow comfortable with it, and the benefits will become apparent.

Configure your Controls

Mastery of the controls is key to succeeding in *Tribes*.

You'll need to set up a configuration that works well for you. There's no ideal configuration that fits everyone perfectly; you'll have to experiment and find one that you can live with.

Regardless of what setup you choose, all vital combat commands should be within easy reach. You should seldom, if ever, have to look at the keyboard to find a command key. When this *does* happen, it should only be for relatively uncommon commands that aren't essential to combat, such as dropping ammo.

Fig. 5-1. Configure your controls before starting to play.

Sample Setup

Here's a sample configuration that uses a three-button mouse and keyboard. This happens to be the configuration that the author uses, so rest assured that it works. Feel free to try it, but don't hesitate to abandon it if it doesn't suit you.

First, go to the Options panel from the main menu. Under Controls and Movement, make sure that Free Look Always On is checked.

> *Free Look Always On is used by many of the best 3D action gamers. When it's enabled, your mouse movements control what direction you're looking in, rather than moving your feet.*
>
> *This option enables you to look up and down with zero effort. This is absolutely vital in games like* Tribes, *where most of your enemies will be located somewhere above or below you.*
>
> *Disabling this option severely limits your ability to play* Tribes.

You also might want to check the Flip Mouse Vertical box, also found on this menu. This inverts your mouse movements so that pulling back translates into "look up," and pushing forward translates to "look down." Try it and see if it makes sense to you. If you're used to flight simulators, chances are good that it will.

Finally, you'll want to adjust the mouse sensitivity slider. You'll have to actually play to decide what mouse sensitivity works for you, but many players tend to do well with the slider set a bit left of center.

Now it's time to set up keys using the Movement, General, and Inventory menus. Your right hand controls the mouse. Mouse buttons are set up as follows:

• Mouse movement controls your orientation

• Right mouse button is Forward

• Left mouse button is Fire Weapon

• Center mouse button is Zoom

Your left hand rests on the keyboard, with your index finger on ⌷.⌷ and your pinkie on ⌷N⌷. Keys are set up as follows:

- ⌷/⌷ Switches to the next weapon
- ⌷.⌷ Strafe Right
- ⌷,⌷ Strafe Left
- ⌷M⌷ Backward
- ⌷N⌷ Jetpack
- ⌷B⌷ Commander Screen
- ⌷Spacebar⌷ Jump

For the most part, these commands are mapped to the keys that your fingers rest upon. The Commander Screen key isn't directly underneath your fingers, but you can slide your pinkie over and tap it quickly. So it's extremely easy to locate.

Also, the Spacebar isn't directly under your fingers, but you can reach it with your thumb or hit it by lowering your palm.

If you frequently switch from first person to third person view mode, as some players do, you should bind the 1st/3rd Toggle command to something easily accessible as well.

There are several other commands that are used frequently. These are arranged on the next row up so that you can reach up and tap them quickly:

- ⌷;⌷ Use Pack
- ⌷L⌷ Use Repair Kit
- ⌷K⌷ Deploy Beacon
- ⌷J⌷ Throw Grenade
- ⌷H⌷ Throw Mine

This is a simple arrangement that lets you handle just about anything you might want to do in combat. Primary commands are all either under your fingers or close at hand.
You might also want to assign your favorite weapons to nearby keys. That way, you can quickly switch to a favorite without having to cycle through weapons with ⌷/⌷.

Less crucial or less common commands can be set up any way you'd like, or simply left at their default keys. Just be sure to remember where they are.

Get Comfortable with the Controls

Once you've settled on a configuration that seems to work, stick with it and practice. If a particular command needs to be moved because it's hard to access, move it as soon as you identify the problem, and keep practicing.

You won't be particularly good at *Tribes* as long as you have to think about what keys to press. Only when the controls become second nature will you start to excel.

Fight Preliminaries

OK, you've got your controls set up, and you're fairly used to them. Now you can jump into a game and at least not worry about fumbling for the right key. But there are still a number of things you should do before you even get into a fight.

Scan the Area

Tribes features huge, multi-level game environments instead of the small, claustrophobic hallways that dominate many 3D action games. This means that your enemies won't always be readily visible. They may be way off in the distance, aiming a Laser Rifle at you from a hilltop. Or they may be skulking behind a ridgeline, using a Jammer Pack to avoid detection. Or they may be standing above or below your base, safe from radar detection, waiting for an opportune moment to strike.

Fig. 5-2. Careful use of the Image Enhancer sometimes reveals enemies who aren't otherwise visible.

Even if you manage to detect an enemy, if you fail to observe your surroundings, you might not notice his teammates. *Tribes* is a team game, and getting attacked by more than one player at once is a serious risk. Even players with great combat skills will have trouble if they continually fight against superior odds.

The bottom line is that situational awareness is a big deal in *Tribes*. You have to develop techniques for staying aware of your surroundings. The three most common ways are as follows:

Keep scanning the terrain.

Periodically check the map in the Commander View.

Occasionally jet straight up in the air and spin around, thus gaining an elevated perspective and spotting enemies that would otherwise remain hidden.

Learn the Match-ups

Fig. 5-3. Don't walk into bad situations like walking alone in Heavy Armor on a relatively flat map.

Don't walk into fights that you're ill equipped for. Understand the advantages and limitations of each weapon and armor type, as well as the danger of attacking players in strong positions. Then you can avoid situations that are disadvantageous.

For example, you should rarely attack two or more enemies by yourself. Even if you have great skills, that's a fight that's difficult to win. You could, however, harass both enemies if you have Light Armor and good movement skills. Perhaps you could draw them away from their current location if that's your main intent.

As another example, you should know better than to march out into the open in Heavy Armor, without any support. Skilled players will just cut you down from long range. On the flip side, if you're wearing Light Armor and fighting someone in Heavy Armor, don't get too close and don't stand around. Use your jets to get airborne and to fight from a distance. Capitalize on your opponent's lack of mobility; don't get close, where he can easily shoot you.

We'll discuss this topic more later in the chapter.
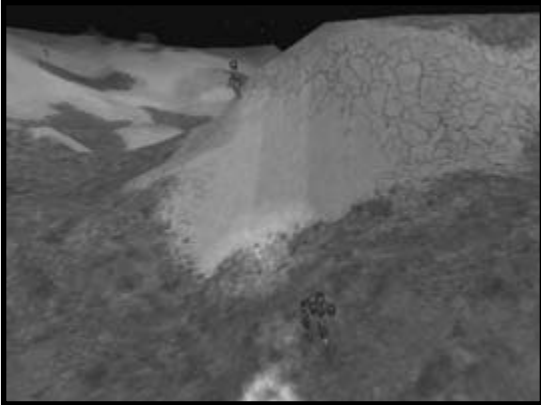
Fig. 5-4. Movement is crucial to success in combat.

Keep Moving

Beginners tend to stand still when fighting. That's the absolute worst thing you can do. Standing still makes you an easy target and ensures that anyone can hit you. You won't live very long if you take that sort of pounding!

Lack of movement also makes you extremely vulnerable to sniper fire and long-range Heavy Mortar attacks.

We'll discuss some common movement tactics in the next few pages, but before we get there, just remember this: In combat, movement of any kind is almost always preferable to standing still.

Run Away, If Necessary

Be prepared to run away from any fight. Of course, this isn't feasible if you're wearing Heavy Armor, and you're being harassed by someone in Light Armor. But you can still try to retreat to terrain that's bumpier, where you can hide and be protected more than you would in the open.

Remember, most *Tribes* games aren't won or lost based on kills. They're based on completing your objectives. Never be afraid to run away.

Movement Fundamentals

When you do become embroiled in a fight, you'll soon realize that winning is closely tied in to movement. Choosing a good weapon and aiming are also crucial—and these skills will come with time. But what really sets beginners apart from veterans is beginners' lack of mobility. They tend to concentrate so much on aiming that they forget to move.

Here are a few tips on how to move effectively in combat.

Learn to Strafe

"Strafing", in action game terms, means pressing a key that moves your character sideways. This is different from turning. Turning actually turns your viewpoint around, whereas strafing slides your whole virtual body sideways while you continue to face the same direction.

Strafing is useful in combat because it allows you to dodge shots without turning away from your enemy. Press the left strafe key to slide neatly out of the path of an incoming projectile. Press the right strafe key to slide right back to where you were before.

Strafing is usually preferable to turning in a fight. That's because it allows you to move sideways and dodge incoming shots while keeping your eyes glued on your target. Turning, on the other hand, requires you to abandon your view of the target.

In a long-range firefight—for example, one where Blasters and Laser Rifles are being used— a little strafing goes a long way. Strafe to either side to avoid incoming projectiles; then strafe back to center position and fire a few shots at the enemy. You'll stay alive a lot longer.

Learn to Run Backwards

Though less crucial than strafing, running backward can be a valuable trick. It's easiest to do this if you're using a mouse, and you have Free Look Always On enabled.

While running forward, simultaneously take your finger off the Forward key and whip your mouse sideways so that you turn 180 degrees. Then, just a split second later, press and hold down the Backward key. You're now running backwards.

When is this trick useful? Let's say that you run into a group of enemies. Retreating is the best course of action, but you don't want to let your pursuers get too comfortable. Running backwards lets you return fire, so they can't follow you in a straight line and pick you off at their leisure.

> *Of course, if you really want to escape, you also have to add jump jets to the mix. Read on for details.*

Learn to use Jump Jets

Jump jets are absolutely necessary in combat. The lighter your armor, the more you need to use those jets. Even Heavy Armor wearers should use them for occasional bursts of speed.

Light Armor, in particular, is incredibly mobile and allows you to jet high into the air. It's almost impossible to hit someone who's airborne. This is because of that player's speed, and because there's no ground nearby to shoot explosives into to cause splash damage.

Also, it's usually easier to aim weapons from the air. The Disk Launcher, for example, tends to be hard to aim from the ground. It's tricky getting the disk to hit the player directly, and hitting the ground near the player's feet requires a very precise shot at a sharp angle.

Fig. 5-5. Jump jets are crucial in combat; use them as frequently as possible, and concentrate on staying airborne.

Shooting from the air, however, makes the angle much more favorable.

Regardless of your armor type, you need to spend as much time as possible in the air. While sideways movement is useful, vertical movement is better. It allows you to position yourself high enough so explosives hitting the ground below won't catch you in their blast radius. Also, the more you jet vertically instead of horizontally, the more time you'll spend in the air. It's just that simple.

The bottom line is that you should almost always use jump jets in combat. Jetting is much more effective than strafing alone. The best policy is to combine jumping with a little strafing so that you catch major air and also move sideways. This makes you virtually untouchable while you're airborne.

Learn to Fire and Spin while Jetting

Use your jets constantly. It'll take a while to learn them inside and out and develop an instinctive feel for how high and how far they'll take you. Once you're comfortable with them, you need to start adding to your jetting repertoire. Learn to spin around, fire at targets that are also airborne, and observe the land below you.

When you first start jetting, you'll have tunnel vision. Your only concern will be jumping to the spot you want to reach; that's pretty hard all by itself. But again, this gets easier with time. The more comfortable you are with jumping, the more you can do while airborne. Experienced players have complete awareness as they jet. They continue to do the same sorts of things in the air—shooting, strafing, spinning—that they do on the ground. Just because they're jumping doesn't mean that they can't do other things as well. But remember, energy management is key to survival.

Circle Strafing

Circle strafing is the fighting style of choice in most 3D action games. That isn't the case with *Tribes,* for reasons we'll discuss later, but we'll explain the maneuver here because it's occasionally useful.

What is Circle Strafing?

Circle strafing takes basic strafing a step farther, but from a conceptual standpoint it's pretty simple.

To circle strafe an immobile target, hold down either the left or right strafe key while facing that target. You'll start sliding off in one direction.

As you slide in your chosen direction, your target will slip out of your field of view—but you want to keep looking at the target as you move. To do this, keep holding down the strafe key and simultaneously slide the mouse sideways to turn your view back toward the target. If you're strafing to the left, you'll have to slide the mouse to the right to keep the target in view. If you're strafing to the right, you'll have to move the mouse left to maintain your view.

As you continue to strafe sideways, you'll find that you must continue using the mouse to turn yourself if you want to keep the target in view. It's an ongoing process.

Keep this up for awhile, and you'll realize that you're actually moving in a circle (Figure 5-6). Your constant efforts to keep the target in view have caused you to run circles around it. Congratulations, you're circle strafing!
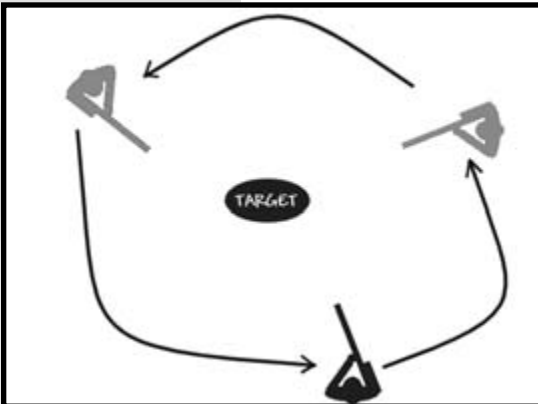
Figure 5-6. Circle strafing seen from overhead. If you try to keep your target in view while you strafe, you'll find yourself naturally running in a circle with your target at the center.

Of course, for this tactic to be of any use, you have to fire at the target while circling it. Aiming while running takes a little practice.

Your opponent might also try to circle strafe. Combat then looks a bit like Figure 5-7, with the two combatants circling each other and firing all the while.
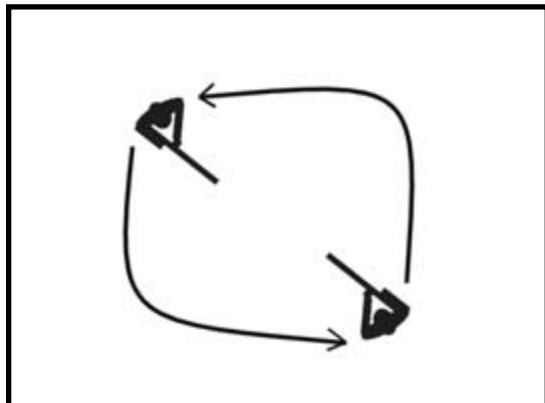
Figure 5-7. Two circle strafing enemies seen from overhead.

> *If you aren't in a big, open area you can't always run in perfect circles. That's fine. Strafing while keeping your target in view is the point, making a perfect circle isn't.*

Why Circle Strafe?

What's the point of circle strafing? It keeps you in perpetual motion, which makes you a lot harder to hit. Enemies have to lead you with their shots, which is trickier than firing at a motionless target.

Of course, your movement will initially make it harder for you to hit your target. But you'll gradually learn to fire accurately on the run. Since you'll know what you're planning to do before you do it, you'll have an easier time hitting enemies than they'll have hitting you.

Adapting Circle Strafing for Tribes

Pure Circle strafing is most valuable in games where players don't have jump jets. In those games, lateral movement is the best way to avoid shots.

Since *Tribes* features jump jets, which allow you to move vertically, pure circle strafing is fairly obsolete. Jumping vertically makes you much harder to hit than running laterally.

The key, then, is to incorporate parts of circle strafing into your jump jetting routine. If you can circle strafe while airborne you'll be an extremely effective fighter.

Advanced Fight Techniques

Combat in *Tribes* is highly situational; the best tactics for any situation depend largely on the circumstances. The following sections examine specialized fighting techniques for specific situations.

Sniping

Sniping is a fairly easy way of picking off enemies, especially those who don't know you're there.

First, try to get up on a high point. If you can avoid detection, so much the better; unwary targets move less than ones who know of your presence. Ridgelines are great for sniping because you can slide back down the other side of the ridge to quickly hide.

Next, zoom in with the Image Enhancer. If you don't have a good shot right away, be patient. Missing with the first shot often gives away your position. Also, only fire when your energy is fully charged to do the most damage.

After you do take a shot, assuming that you didn't kill the target, you should sneak back behind cover for a few moments. Players who have just been shot will look for the source; it's best not to be visible at that time.

Fig. 5-8. Sniping is both fun and valuable. It prevents enemies from holding one position too long and penalizes players for using Heavy Armor in bad spots.

Then, after hiding for a few moments, pop up again and take another shot. Of course, most skilled enemies won't stand around and let you shoot them a second time. But if you did a good enough job of hiding, they might think you left the area.

Be aware that sniping leaves you open to enemy sniping. Since you tend to be immobile when you fire at the enemy, other snipers will have a perfect shot at you during that time. Scout the area as thoroughly as possible before starting to snipe, or you'll find yourself on the wrong end of the Laser Rifle.

Jet Fighting

Players in all armor types need to learn to use their jets, but Light Armored players especially can make jetting while fighting an art form. As mentioned previously, you want to stay airborne as much as possible during combat, especially in Light Armor. So you should devote lots of effort toward maximizing your airtime.

Learn little tricks like jumping before jetting for extra lift, or tapping the Jetpack key, instead of holding it, to let energy build back up. These will soon become second nature.

Never allow yourself to become complacent and remain on the ground a second longer than necessary. If this happens, you either need to prod yourself into action or choose a less mobile armor type. Never waste your Light Armor's biggest asset—mobility.

Interior Fighting

Interior fights have their own set of rules, especially when they take place in enclosed spaces. Heavier armor rules the corridors. If you're in Light Armor, you need to master the art of firing and retreating, firing and retreating.

Fig. 5-9. Indoor fights have their own set of rules.

Grenade Launchers are particularly crucial weapons indoors because they let you hit enemies hiding behind corners, or at least flush them out.

Lightly armored players should retreat quickly and try to approach heavily armored players from unexpected directions, in hopes of getting in a few quick shots. Plasma Guns and Grenade Launchers are ideal weapons.

Heavily armored players fighting lightly armored foes should use explosive weapons such as Disk Launchers. These are very effective against Light Armor, have a good blast radius, and have the added benefit of bouncing their victims around, disorienting them slightly.

When two lightly armored foes meet indoors, the Chaingun can be effective, as can the Disk Launcher. Heavily armored opponents tend to resort to the Plasma Gun and Heavy Mortar. These can easily hit heavy foes and deal tremendous damage, especially in close quarters.

Using Terrain

Learn to use the terrain as you fight. Particularly, observe these rules:

- Try to not let your enemy stand on higher ground than you. The higher you are, the more movement options open up for you.
- Standing on or near ridgelines helps. Being atop a ridge increases your options. You can drop off either side of the ridge, use the ridge to block enemy fire, or jump to a great height.

- If you're on a steep hillside, mentally draw a line that starts with your opponent, hits you, and then goes slightly past you. If the line connects with the slope behind you just a few feet after hitting you, you're in a bad spot. The enemy can now fire an explosive weapon such as a Disk Launcher or Plasma Gun. Even if they miss you, the projectiles will hit the ground behind you and deal splash damage. If you find yourself in this situation, jump away from the hillside and try to reach a spot where there's no ground directly behind you.

Fig. 5-10. Try to stick to the high ground while fighting.

Exploiting Vulnerabilities

You'll eventually become more accustomed to various armor and weapons, and understand their capabilities better. Therefore, you'll get an increasingly better grasp of how to exploit enemies' weaknesses based on their armor and weapons choices. There are too many instances to list, but here are a few examples.

- When an enemy tries to gun you down with a Chaingun, seek cover briefly, then pop out again. The Chaingun takes a moment to start firing, and if you're under cover, your opponent will usually stop firing until you reappear. That gives you time to reappear and return fire for a moment before the Chaingun has time to start up again.

- If your enemy is firing a Grenade Launcher at you, try to stand on a nearby slope. The Grenades will tend to bounce away from you, making you hard to hit.

- When enemies in Light Armor try to get too fancy with their jump jet tactics, use the Disk Launcher to shoot walls or ridgelines behind them. You can also use the ELF Gun to quickly drop them, then switch to the Disk Launcher for an easy shot.

- Stay well away from enemies in Heavy Armor, and ping them with Laser Rifle or Blaster fire. Use your mobility to disappear behind an obstacle, then reappear somewhere unexpected.

- Get extremely close to opponents in Heavy Armor who try to use the Heavy Mortar on you. Then, jet away at top speed when the mortar shell is fired. Often you can get an over-eager foe to kill himself with the blast.

- Sink back to longer range when enemies try to use the Plasma Gun on you. Then switch to the Disk Launcher, which shoots faster projectiles than the Plasma Gun.

The list goes on. Keep your eyes open and pay attention to how your enemies kill you—particularly when they dispatch you with ease. Usually their choice of weapons and tactics is to some degree predicated on the weapons and armor you're using. This is the best way to learn what weapons and armor to use in any given situation.

Teamwork

There's a limit to how good you can be on your own. Teamwork will improve your effectiveness instantly, without requiring lots of work on tricky combat skills. Just having a friend to distract enemies makes them more likely to forget about your presence and make a mistake.

Fig. 5-11. Teamwork helps to improve your effectiveness.

There are any number of ways to use teamwork, but for combat purposes, the first and most important step is just to use a partner system. Make sure that the players on your team all have companions and go about their tasks in pairs and trios instead of all alone. Again, just having someone to help you fight, even if no tactics have been agreed upon, can really make a difference.

Once you've got friends, more sophisticated teamwork is possible. For example, a teammate in Heavy Armor can walk into the enemy's view while friends in Light Armor use a Jammer Pack and hide behind a ridge. When enemies run out to pick on the lone Heavy Armor wearer, the light teammates can ambush them.

The exact degree of teamwork you can achieve depends on how well you know your teammates and how effectively you can communicate with them. A local area network (LAN) encourages the most communication because teammates can often physically shout to one another. On the Internet, communication is harder; you'll need to play with people you know and continue to play with them over time. Eventually you'll get used to their styles of play.

The best way to improve teamwork is to join a Tribe. See Appendix A for more on this.

Getting Better

This chapter points you in the right direction, but as we've tried to stress, it won't take you all the way to greatness. The best way to improve is simply to play, and to keep watching your enemies to learn new techniques.

In particular, study the players that make you angry. Chances are, they're making you angry because they're beating you. Pay attention to the ways they kill you—the armor type, the weapons, the footwork. Try to reason out what allowed them to beat you.

If you want to do even more homework, join a game and enter Observer mode. Look for a particularly skilled player and lock onto him or her. Just

Fig. 5-12. Use the Observer mode to watch particularly good players and learn from them.

watch that player for a while, and put some thought into what you're seeing.

Every time the player kills an enemy or achieves an objective, consider why it happened. Perhaps the player you're watching paid more attention to his surroundings. Perhaps he used armor that was more suited to his situation. Perhaps he stayed in the air longer than his opponent. There are hundreds of subtle tricks and skills that are hard to describe but easy to grasp if you see them in action. Watch your enemies carefully, and you're certain to learn.

6
Key Concepts

This chapter discusses key concepts that will appear time and again as you play *Tribes*. These concepts are listed in no particular order, but they share a common theme: They're all topics that are central to understanding your game environment and becoming a better player. Most of the information in this chapter can eventually be absorbed just by playing *Tribes* online. But we're presenting it here so you can learn quickly and move on.

Buying and Favorites

One of the first things you should do is develop five sets of Inventory Station Favorites. Then, whenever you want your favorite weapons and armor, you can purchase them later with a single button click.

The game remembers your Favorites lists, so the time you spend carefully selecting Favorites will pay dividends later. Setting your Favorites also benefits your team. It gets you out of the Inventroy Station quickly, allowing faster access to your teammates.

It's recommended that you develop your Favorites list at an Inventory Station that isn't very crowded. Better yet, host a multiplayer game and don't have anyone else join it. You'll find yourself all alone on an empty map. Then, you can wander up to any Inventory Station you choose and select Favorites at your leisure, when there are no distractions.

Fig. 6-1. Favorites lists should be developed as soon as possible.

Generally speaking, you want to select sets of Favorites that correspond to different roles. For example, you might have a set of Favorites for times when you want to play sniper. This set might look like this:

• Light Armor
• Energy Pack
• Laser Rifle
• Disk Launcher
• Plasma Gun
• Repair Kit
• Mine (3)
• Grenade (5)
• Assorted Ammo

Another set of Favorites might be a "heavy base defense" set. This might include Heavy Armor, several weapons, a Shield or Repair Pack (to repair parts of your base) and anything else you think you'd need. You'd select this set whenever you choose to guard the interior of a small base.

Favorites shouldn't be set in stone. They're general-purpose lists and won't always apply to every game. If it's clear that a particular set isn't optimal for your game, modify it. This is preferable to buying the Favorites, selling the unwanted items, and then buying replacements every time you visit the Inventory Station.

Using Jump Jets

Jump jet mastery is crucial to success in *Tribes*. You should get in the habit of using jets constantly, both in combat and as you move from one place to another.

The first rule of jump jets is "Up, then Over." Jet straight up until you're at the height you want; *then* move forward, sideways, or wherever you want to go. Moving laterally right away kills your upward momentum, so you won't get much height if you start pressing the Forward or Backward key too early.

The second rule is to always jump before you take off. This gives you extra lift and is particularly important in the heavier armor types, which need all the

Fig. 6-2. Even in Heavy Armor, you should make use of jump jets whenever possible.

help they can get. Also, if you jump forward, your forward momentum will carry into your jump. This allows you to move forward right away, without pressing the Forward key and killing your upward momentum.

You might see players making jumps that you thought were impossible—for example, from a hilltop all the way to the top of a floating base. A combination of things makes these jumps possible. That combination usually begins with careful observation of the two rules we just explained. It also includes Light Armor, jumping from the highest possible point, and perhaps even an Energy Pack for more jet power.

The Sensor Network

A key to understanding *Tribes* is to understand the sensor network. A faulty understanding of the sensor network will prevent you from becoming a good player.

The Enemy Sensor Network: Getting Detected

Sensors come in many types, and they're all slightly different. (Read Chapters 3 and 4 for specifics on various deployable and permanent sensors, and how they work.) Anytime an enemy sensor or camera "sees" you, you're added to the enemy sensor network.

You're also added to the enemy sensor network whenever an enemy is looking in your direction, and you're within a certain visual range of that enemy.

Note that the key here is *visual* range, not *actual* range. A very distant enemy looking your way might barely see you walking around. But if you're outside of that visual range, the red triangle won't appear over your head. If that enemy uses an Image Enhancer to zoom in and stare at you "up close," however, you'll get added to the enemy sensor network.

Fig. 6-3. Pulse Sensors are a common way to be added to the enemy sensor network—but by no means the only way.

To summarize:

- **An enemy who's looking at you will add you to the enemy sensor network unless he's extremely far away.**
- **An enemy whose back is turned to you won't add you to the sensor network, no matter how close you are. So it is indeed possible to sneak up behind on an enemy undetected.**
- **An enemy looking at you from long range may or may not add you to the enemy sensor network, depending on the distance. If that enemy zooms in on you with an Image Enhancer, though, you're sure to be added to the sensor network.**

The Consequences of Detection

What, exactly, does being added to the enemy sensor network entail? It means two things. First, if your enemies look at their Command Screens, you'll appear on the map. This means that any enemy looking for a fight knows exactly where to find you. Second, any player looking in your general direction will see a red triangle floating over your head. This even happens if you're so far away that he normally wouldn't be able to see you.

Fig. 6-4. Hiding behind ridgelines is a good way to avoid both Pulse Sensors and visual detection.

The red triangle leaves you open to all sorts of abuse. Laser Rifle sniping and Heavy Mortar shelling are two of the most common forms. That little red triangle is nothing more than a "Shoot me!" sign plastered on top of your head. That's why evading the enemy sensor network is always desirable.

Staying Undetected

Big terrain features, such as hills and ridges, allow you to hide from Pulse Sensors, which all operate on line of sight. It's standard practice to hide under cover of these features in an effort to stay off the enemy's sensor network as much as possible. This is particularly key if you're attempting a stealth mission, but even overt attacks work more smoothly if they aren't detected until they're near their target.

> *Even if you have a Jammer Pack, use natural cover because it'll hide from visual detection. Plus your jammer can't work indefinitely.*

On the flip side, be aware that enemies will do the same thing to you. So they won't always appear on your sensor network—even if they're technically within the radius of a Pulse Sensor.

A Sensor Jammer placed on the ground, or an active Jammer Pack on your back, will hide you from all types of enemy Pulse Sensors. They will not, however, shield you from Motion Sensors or enemies that visually detect you. Either of these threats is perfectly capable of adding you to the enemy sensor network.

Knowing When You're Detected

Rookies run around without any idea of whether they've been detected or not. Veterans learn how the enemy sensor network operates (which you just did by reading the last few pages). They constantly ask themselves, "Has anyone seen me? If not, is anyone likely to see me?" It's important to know if you've been added to the enemy sensor network. Then, you can take evasive action if you have, and proceed efficiently with your business if you haven't.

Learn to watch the Sensor Indicator in the upper right corner of your screen. If it's green, enemy Pulse Sensors are *not* detecting you. If it's yellow, you're being protected from Pulse Sensors by a jammer—either a Jammer Pack on your back or a Remote Jammer nearby. If it's red, enemy Pulse Sensors have indeed picked you up. If that's the case, you're guaranteed to be on the enemy sensor network.

Your Sensor Indicator can't tell when an enemy visually spots you, when a motion detector picks you up, or when a Camera sights you. It just tells you when you're being seen by Pulse Sensors, which are by no means the only things that can detect you. So be advised that even though your Sensor Indicator is green, it's still possible that you're being watched.

Building Infrastructure and Defenses

It's possible to win without building an infrastructure of Remote Pulse Sensors, Motion Sensors, Remote Inventory Stations, and Remote Turrets. But that infrastructure sure helps.

Ideally, you want to have sensor influence over much of the map. This is easy to achieve if you have at least one team member constantly doing things that will build infrastructure. So have someone deploy Remote Turrets, Cameras, and Motion Sensors near bases and key structures, and scatter Remote Pulse Sensors across the map. Ideally, this team member will double as a base defender if things get ugly.

Attacking players should also take it upon themselves to place the occasional deployable on the map.

Fig. 6-5. Several Remote Pulse Sensors have been placed on this map, greatly extending sensor range.

The most common and effective deployables for offensive players include Remote Inventory Stations and Sensor Jammers, both of which facilitate base attacks.

As a general rule, anything that can be deployed is easy to blow up. A few well-placed shots from any weapon will take out Remote Turrets and Remote Pulse Sensors. However, most players aren't fully committed to destroying these resources. They're busy doing other things. Therefore, a number of them are likely to remain. And as long as your team has a better sensor network than the enemy does, you'll have a definite advantage.

Be aware of enemy infrastructure. Whenever you stumble across a small object deployed in the battlefield, check the map in the Commander View to see if it's yours. If so, it'll show up as a green object on the map. If it belongs to the enemy, it'll be red or invisible. Destroy it if that's the case, being sure to stand back slightly because deployables explode when they're shot.

Understanding Terrain

The vast majority of the maps you'll fight on are outdoor areas. Very few of these areas are particularly level; most feature prominent ridges, slopes, and inclines. Learning how to make the most of these features is crucial to survival.

Terrain in Battles

Terrain figures prominently in most battles. So don't let your enemy stand on higher ground than you, and don't stand where there's ground behind your back. For example, if you're standing on a hillside when you're attacked, you've got ground right behind your back. So even if the enemy misses with the Disk Launcher or Plasma Gun, they projectiles will hit the ground behind you and deal splash damage.

Terrain and Sensors

We've already discussed the effects of terrain on Pulse Sensors under "Staying Undetected," earlier in this chapter. Refer back to that section if necessary, and remember to stay hidden from enemy Pulse Sensors whenever it's feasible.

Fig. 6-6. In battles, you want to stick to the air or high ground whenever possible.

Fig. 6-7. After leaving the mission area, there's no green wedge on the map to show you where you are.

Limits of Terrain

The terrain of your combat area extends far beyond what you'll see in the Command Screen map. However, terrain beyond the edges of the Command Screen map is considered to be outside the mission area.

In most cases, there's no real penalty for wandering outside the mission area. It's sometimes even desirable to do this if you're trying to sneak somewhere since you're unlikely to encounter any enemies beyond the mission area's boundaries.

If you're playing a mission with flags, however, and you happen to be carrying a flag when you exit the mission area, it's another story. The flag returns to its original location the instant you leave the combat area. In these cases, you should carefully avoid the edge of the map.

Also, in deathmatch-style missions, where the objective is to rack up kills, you'll start getting damaged after a few seconds outside the mission area.

If you happen to get outside the mission area and can't find your way back, just assign yourself a waypoint. Read the section titled "Setting Waypoints" for more details.

The Commander View

The Commander View is a powerful tool. It's dominated by a map that shows you the position of everything that's been detected by your team's sensor network. That's every team member, every friendly piece of equipment, and every enemy player or device—everything!

Read the manual for specifics on what the Commander View's buttons and menu options do. Then read the following for insights on how to put that knowledge into practice.

Reading the Map

The Commander Screen's biggest feature is a large map. This map is explained in your game manual, but a few things bear repeating.

First, note that all of your teammates will appear on the map unless they've left the mission area. Your enemies, however, won't all show up on the map. Only the enemies inside your team's sensor network will appear.

Next, note that if players have lines extending from them to a point on the map, it means they have an assignment. Perhaps they were given an assignment by a commander; perhaps they gave themselves an assignment (see Setting Waypoints, below). It's nice when your teammates have visible assignments. Then you can see what they're trying to accomplish without asking them or observing them for a prolonged period of time.

Also, note that while the map shows the sweep of your team's Pulse Sensors, there may be enemies hiding within those arcs. They may be hiding behind terrain features or using jammers of some kind.
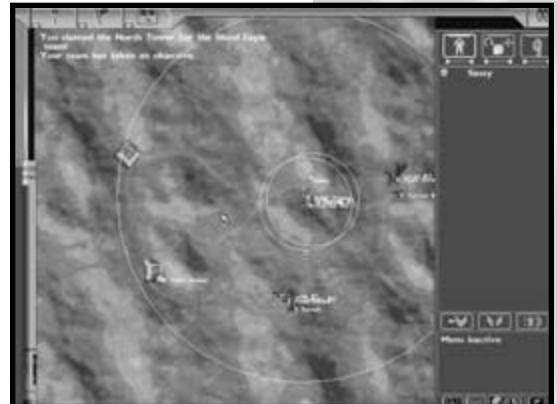
Fig. 6-8. Learn to constantly refer to the map. If you don't, you'll have no idea what the big picture looks like.
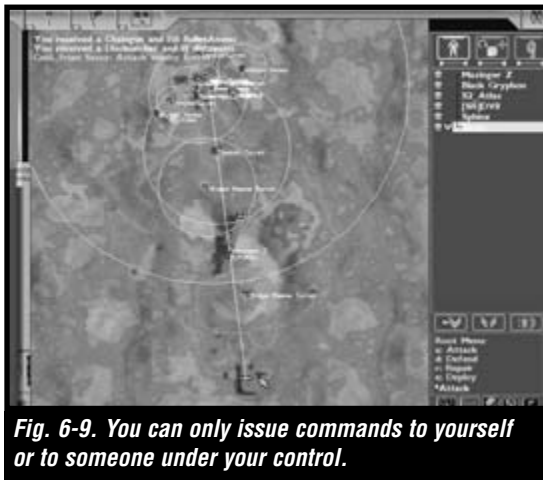
Fig. 6-9. You can only issue commands to yourself or to someone under your control.

Issuing Commands

Having read the section of the manual that deals with commands, you may be anxious to command others or receive orders from your fellow players. Here are a few things to bear in mind.

First, you can issue commands to players under your control. Players are placed under your control if they select your name from the Commander Screen and press the Select Commander button. You can also issue commands to peers if they have not assigned themselves to a command, or been assigned one by a commander. There's no way for you to force yourself into a commanding role. A player has to actually select you as a commander before you can order that player around.

As you can imagine, this leads to organizational problems when your team is inexperienced or contains individuals who don't want to be given orders. You can beg and plead with people to make you their commander, but you need their cooperation to make it happen. If players on your team are unwilling to designate a commander, you're stuck with a disorganized team. (See Getting Organized, below, for more details on how to cope with this situation.)

If you're keen on teamwork, but nobody will make you commander, feel free to select another team member and make him or her your commander. At least that way, someone's in control of somebody, which theoretically helps your team get coordinated.

Setting Waypoints

Even if you aren't in control of anyone else, you're still in control of yourself. You can select yourself from the Player List of the Commander Screen and issue *yourself* orders with the root menu under the player list.

> *The last line on the chat HUD always displays the last command issued to you. The text is yellow until you acknowledge the command, at which point it turns green. Commands you issue to yourself are automatically green.*

Why would you issue yourself an order? After all, you know exactly what you're doing; formally ordering yourself to do something seems redundant. There are two reasons for issuing yourself orders: It helps with navigation, and it lets teammates know your plans.

First, issuing yourself a command helps you navigate. For example, if you order yourself to attack the enemy base, you'll notice that a green arrow appears on the compass of your HUD. This arrow indicates the direction of your objective, allowing you to instantly determine what direction it lies in. A number in the center of the compass indicates the distance to the objective.

> *It's always nice to have that green arrow pointing you in the right direction. But it's especially useful if you manage to wander out of the mission area and can't see yourself on the map. In this situation, it's possible to actually get lost and not know how to get back onto the map. But if you've given yourself an objective, the green arrow will help you get back on track.*

Second, your teammates can look at the map and see a line that runs from you to your objective. This allows them to instantly see what you're up to. For example, if the line runs to the enemy base, they can determine that you're going to attack it.

> *If you just want a reference point on your compass, and you don't want your teammates to know what you're up to, press the Objective Completed key. This will remove the line from the map but retain the marker on your compass so you can easily navigate.*

Controlling Turrets

Another thing you'll want to do from the Commander Screen is take manual control of turrets. (This only works if you're at a Command Station.) Do this by selecting them from the Controllable Objects list. Return to the Commander Screen by pressing Esc.

Get used to quickly going back and forth between the Commander Screen and a controllable object. This will come in handy. You can quickly locate incoming enemies with the Commander Screen's map, then switch to the closest turret to hand out some punishment.

You can also control Cameras in the same way you control turrets, but you don't need to be at a Command Station.

Destroying Objects

At some point in most games, you'll want to destroy heavy enemy objects, such as turrets or Pulse Sensors. It's key to understand your limitations as you attack these objects. Otherwise, you'll spend lots of time trying to do something impossible.

Fig. 6-10. Most turrets, like this Missile Turret, are at their best when you're manually controlling them.

Fig. 6-11. You can shoot a Pulse Sensor with a Disk Launcher all you want, but you won't really damage it unless a friend is helping you.

First, understand that small, remote objects (the kind deployed from packs) are fragile. A couple shots from anything will take them out. Fire at will!

Next on the fragility list come Stations (Inventory, Ammo, Command and Vehicle) and Generators. These objects can be destroyed with just about any weapon because they don't have Shields. A few shots from a Plasma Gun is the ideal way to take these things out, but again, anything will do.

More difficult to kill are the small *Sentinel* turrets generally found indoors. These turrets possess Shields, but since they won't fire at you when you aren't moving, you can stand still and pound them. Bear in mind that their Shields are constantly replenishing themselves. So Grenade Launchers, Plasma Guns, and Heavy Mortars are the preferred way to take them out. Fire rapidly and constantly, and don't stop until the turret is gone.

The same rule applies to all other turrets and Pulse Sensors. These objects are protected by heavy Shields. So you shouldn't even consider attacking them with anything less than a Plasma Gun, Grenade Launcher, or Heavy Mortar, the Heavy Mortar being preferable. (You'll need a close shot, lots of ammo, direct aim, and an enemy-free environment to use the Plasma Gun or Grenade Launcher.)

An alternative is to have one or two friends help attack the object. If everyone attacks simultaneously, you can wear the object down with any weapons. Ideally, however, one player will use the ELF Gun, which specializes in draining objects' power so teammates can easily finish it off.

> *Since Shields repair themselves constantly, there's no point in attacking a heavy object slowly. This only gives the Shields time to repair themselves. Instead, you have to fire at these objects as quickly as possible to knock out the Shields, then destroy them.*

Evading Turrets and Infiltrating Bases

To be successful in enemy territory, you must first learn how to avoid being gunned down by turrets.

The first step is learning how to avoid being added to the enemy sensor network. The section labeled "The Sensor Network," earlier in this chapter, will help you with that.

Next, you need to study individual turrets and learn what makes them fire. For example, the Fusion Turret won't automatically fire at you from long distance. And the Missile Turret won't typically bother you if you aren't using your jump jets. Refer to Chapter 4 for details on each turret's peculiarities.

Finally, you need to realize that on maps with Command Stations, human players are capable of taking control of turrets at any time. This makes them deadly and unpredictable. Watch for evidence that a human enemy is controlling turrets, and adjust your strategy accordingly if you see it.

For more on this subject, look to Chapter 11. The topic of invading enemy territory is a big one, and you'll find a detailed examination of how to approach it.

Taking a Role

While you'll probably be aimless in your first few games, you'll soon realize that the most effective players assign themselves a very definite role. They usually change roles as the circumstances dictate. But the important thing is that at any given time they know exactly what they want to achieve.

For example, a player might decide to be a point-of-attack base defender. This means standing near the flag or near the entrance to a base, and guarding it from the enemy. Another role is that of base raider. There are many roles to choose from. Chapters 8-12 explain the task of finding a role and how to excel at the role once you've selected it.

Fig. 6-12. Lots of teammates are on offense right now. In this case, it may be best to play defense.

> *It doesn't matter whether a commander assigns a role to you, or whether you assigned it to yourself. Your game will start to improve the minute you take a definite role.*

Getting Organized

The final concept for you to grasp is that of organization. It's important to determine, right away, what sort of organization (or lack thereof) your team possesses, and how you fit into that organization.

If your team is well organized, with a commander already assigned, you should make that person your commander as well, and play the role you're given. Be happy if this is the case, for unless the commander is hopelessly incompetent, your team is likely to benefit from the organization.

If your team doesn't have an explicit commander, pay attention. Sometimes teams have an informal command structure that's just as effective as a formal one. For example, one player might be extremely good, and other players will follow him around and help him out. If this is the case, ask this player what you should be doing, and try to follow his or her suggestions.

If your teammates aren't helpful in the least, and there's no apparent organization, you can try to jump-start the process. Merely select someone as your commander and see if that player issues any orders.

Finally, if none of the above seems to be working, you have one of two options. First, you can look for an area that's being sorely neglected (defense, for example) and fill it by yourself.

Second, you can try to try to team up with friendly players, even if they don't really care. For example, locate a player that seems competent and use a "buddy" system. Stick near this player to increase the likelihood of his or her mission succeeding. Also, you can watch the Commander Screen map and try to join the flow of battle at opportune times. For example, if several teammates are attacking a position at once, try to get there fast and help out.

This sort of makeshift teamwork isn't ideal, but it's the best you can do when your team won't accept formal command structures. Work with what you've got!
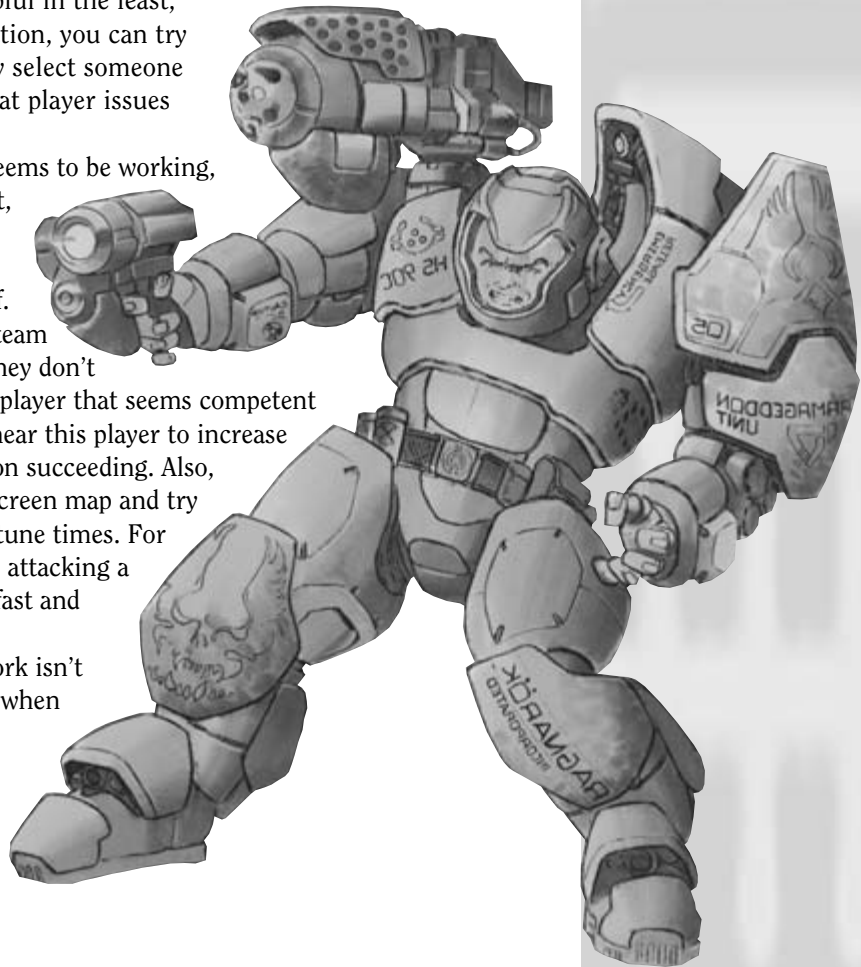
Training Missions

This chapter covers *Tribes'* eight training missions. Pop-up messages will appear during each training mission and walk you through it, so our focus here isn't necessarily to help you win. Instead, our focus is on providing tips that will help you master the techniques required in each mission.

Feel free to refer to this chapter as you play through all eight training missions.
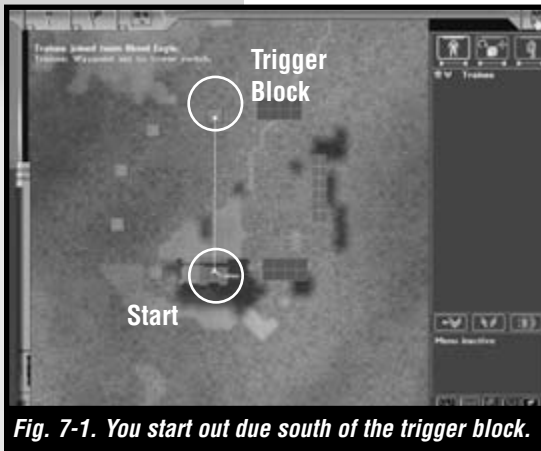
Fig. 7-1. You start out due south of the trigger block.

Mission 1: Welcome

This first mission introduces you to the HUD and to your jump jets.

You start out on an elevated platform. A series of floating platforms leads away from you on two sides. The very top platform has a spinning trigger block that you must touch to end the mission.

> *The trigger block is identical to the ones you'll find in any structure that can be captured for a specific team in multiplayer maps.*

Don't touch the block right away. Instead, pay close attention to the messages that periodically appear and explain your HUD. Meanwhile, jet from platform to platform, avoiding the one with the trigger block for now.

As you jet around, bear the following tips in mind:

- The first rule of jumping is "up, then over." Hold down the Jetpack key without pressing any other movement keys until you reach the desired height. Then, after reaching that height, press another movement key (such as Forward) while holding down the Jetpack key to fly in the desired direction. If you try to move forward or backward or strafe too early, you'll completely kill your upward momentum.

- Always jump before jetting and activate your jets at the top of your jump. This gives you more lift than if you simply started jetting from the ground.

- If you jump while running forward, then trigger the jets at the top of the jump, your forward momentum will carry into your jump. The same holds true of backward or lateral movement. Again, be sure not to keep pressing a movement key during the initial phases of your jetting, or you'll kill your upward momentum.

- Lay off the jets before you reach your target, or you'll overshoot it. You'll need to practice awhile before you know how far you can expect your momentum to carry you. But it's usually better to let up on the jets early. You can always use them again if it looks like you're coming up short. Overshooting your target is a trickier problem to overcome.

- Simultaneously tap the Jetpack and Backward keys to slow down your forward progress. This is useful if you're afraid you'll fly too far and overshoot your target. Optionally, you can hold these keys down to completely stall your movement or even start flying backwards. Or you can spin around 180 degrees in midair, then press Forward. This also reverses your momentum.

- Especially in Light Armor, you can often use up all your energy in a jump, but then wait a split second and tap the Jetpack key again. This uses the energy that built up while you floated in midair. Also, it sometimes gives you a little extra lift to get you over an obstacle or onto a high ledge.

- Try not to use every bit of your energy if you aren't going to reach your target. Otherwise, you'll fall fast and hard. Conserve a bit of energy and use it a second or two before you hit the ground to break your fall somewhat. If you do use all your energy in a jump, lay off the jets for a moment as you fall. A bit of energy will build up, so you can break your fall with that.

Fig. 7-2. Touch the block to end the mission.

When the HUD information stops coming, jet up to the top block and press up against the spinning trigger block. This ends the mission.

You shouldn't try to jet all the way from the ground to the trigger block platform. However, it's possible to jump from the ground all the way up to the platforms on either side of the trigger block. This requires a tall jump, but you might want to try it to test your skills.

Mission 2: Weapons

This mission tests your weapons skills. You needn't worry about movement because you're stuck inside a small base, and you'll be teleported back inside if you try to leave.

Over the course of this mission, weapons will pop up automatically, and enemies will appear at various intervals. Your task is to shoot these enemies—not so difficult since they move slowly and don't shoot back.

Here are some tips that'll get you through it:

• Pop-up tips tell you when enemies have entered the area. If you don't see them and are unsure where they are, use the Commander Screen (it defaults to C) and locate them on the map. Then close the Commander Screen and shoot them.

Fig. 7-3. Stay inside your base.

Fig. 7-4. Zoom in to get a better shot.

• Move around inside your base until you get a clear shot at your target.

• Lead your target.

• Use the Zoom feature. Learn to move and fire while simultaneously holding down the Zoom button. If this is difficult, assign it to a key that you can easily hold down while doing other things.

• When firing the Grenade Launcher, aim for the ground near your target and watch how the Grenades bounce.

• Aim for the feet of your target when using an explosive weapon such as the Disk Launcher and the Plasma Gun.

The mission ends when all targets have been destroyed.

Mission 3: Vehicle

This mission introduces you to flying vehicles. It's not too difficult if you take it slow and easy.

You start out in a base with a Vehicle Station. Approach the station and purchase a Scout. Jump into the Scout and you'll find yourself in the pilot's seat.

> *Switching from first person to third person perspective can be especially valuable when piloting a vehicle. It gives you a better sense of your relationship to the ground and any nearby terrain obstacles.*

Fig. 7-5. You'll need to fly all three vehicle types to complete the mission.

Your task is now to fly to the waypoint marked on your compass where another Vehicle Station awaits. Along the way are sets of pylons that you can fly through if you wish, but doing so doesn't confer any sort of bonus.

> *If you crash and destroy your vehicle, you'll need to go back to the last station you visited, re-purchase it, and try again.*
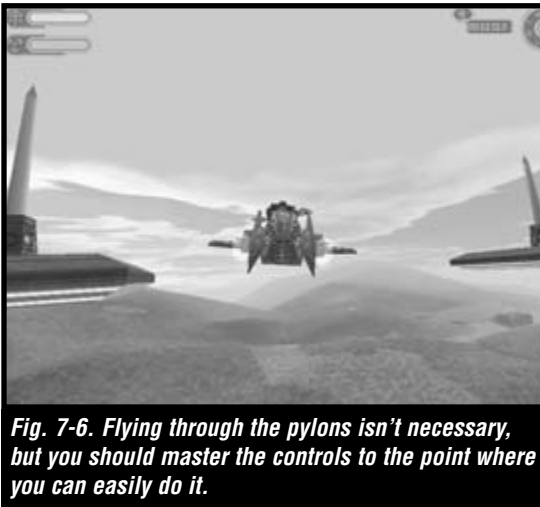
Fig. 7-6. Flying through the pylons isn't necessary, but you should master the controls to the point where you can easily do it.

Here's an overview of the controls:

- The Jetpack key makes the vehicle fly straight up.
- The Forward key makes the vehicle move in the direction you're pointing. If you point the nose of the craft slightly skyward, you'll gain altitude as you move forward. If you point the nose toward the ground, you'll lose altitude.
- The Backward key can be used to halt forward movement and also to move backward.
- Strafe keys may be used to adjust your course, but it's easier just to turn with the mouse. Strafing doesn't work too well in vehicles.

When flying a craft, here are some things to remember:

- The craft doesn't respond to more than one key at once. Thus, if you press the Jetpack key and also hold down the Forward key, you won't get the benefits from both. (That's because the craft has only one set of jets, which can only be pointed in one direction at any given time.) Alternate between keys, therefore, depending on what your priority is.

- To take off, hold down the Jetpack key for a second. Then let up and move forward. Don't try to move forward right away. Without that initial second of vertical Jetpack lift, you'll probably scrape along the bottom of the launch pad and damage the vehicle.

- There's never any good reason to crash. If you're speeding toward an obstacle and think you'll hit it, lay off the Forward key and use the Jetpack key. When you're at sufficient height to clear the obstacle, move forward again.

- As you gain experience you can approach your target at full speed and land perfectly. At first, however, slow down as you approach your landing spot and lay off the Forward key. Then use only periodic taps of the Jetpack key so you will descend slowly. Remember that you can jump at any point to exit the craft, which is particularly useful if you're about to crash.

When you reach the waypoint, land the craft nearby and purchase a Light Personnel Carrier at the Vehicle Station. Fly this craft to the next waypoint where you can purchase a Heavy Personnel Carrier. Finally, fly the Heavy Personnel Carrier to the final waypoint where the mission ends.

Mission 4: Command & Target

This mission requires you to destroy several targets indirectly—by commanding a pair of Heavy Mortar-wielding teammates. It's not a complex mission if you approach it step by step.

First, visit the nearby Inventory Station. Purchase a Targeting Laser. You can also purchase an Energy Pack to increase your mobility, but this isn't required.

Approach the Solar Panels located at your first waypoint. Stand on a hill near the Solar Panels.

> *Avoid the Fusion Turrets in the tower to the west. If you get too close, they'll shoot at you.*
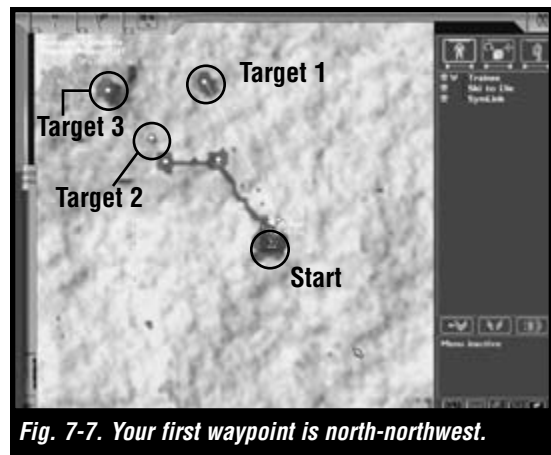
Fig. 7-7. Your first waypoint is north-northwest.

Now, enter the Commander Screen and select your two companions. Order both of them to attack a point on the ground near where you're standing. They won't actually fire at this spot; they'll just run up and join you.

> *Don't order your companions to attack the actual waypoint. If you do this, they'll march underneath the platform the Solar Panels are sitting on where they can't get a good shot at it. Instead, just order them to a spot where they're within Heavy Mortar range of the target. Heavy Mortars can shoot a long way, so you've got a lot of flexibility.*
>
> *In multiplayer games, you needn't worry about specifics like this. You'll be dealing with human teammates capable of making their own decisions. So if you order them to attack a target, they'll know enough to stand well back while they bombard it.*

When your teammates are by your side, select the Targeting Laser from your weapons list, zoom in on the Solar Panels, and fire at them. Hold down the Fire button for a long time and watch where the mortar shells hit. Adjust your aim if you're slightly off.

If your companions aren't shooting, they aren't in a position to do so. Make sure you've moved them close enough that they can shoot at the target, but not so close that they're literally standing beneath it.

Once you've destroyed all the Solar Panels, it's an easy task to destroy the Pulse Sensor at the next waypoint, and the two Fusion Turrets at the third. Be sure to order your teammates into position so they can hit each new target.

The mission ends when all targets are destroyed.

Fig. 7-8. Stand in a place where you can see both your teammates and the target.

Mission 5: CTF
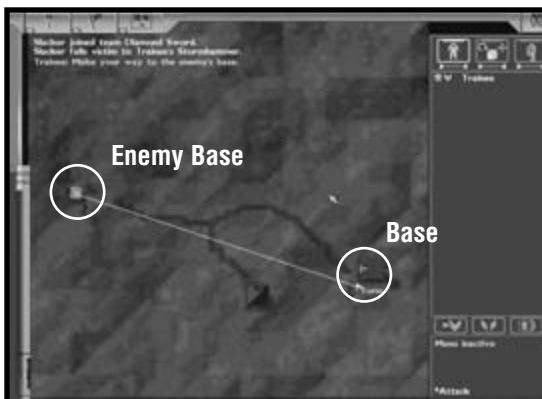
Fig. 7-9. The enemy base is off to the west. Ignore the pyramid near the center of the map; it isn't important.

This mission is a simplified Capture the Flag scenario. It features both enemy turrets and computer-controlled players. Don't worry—the enemy won't go after your flag, so you don't need to concern yourself with defense. All you have to do is retrieve the flag from the enemy base and touch it to your own flag, located slightly southwest of your base. You'll need to do this three times to win.

If you get killed, you get to try again, but if you kill any enemy players, they're gone for good. This allows you to take one thing at a time and achieve your goals without much pressure.

You can take any number of approaches to capturing the enemy's flag, but we'll discuss three in particular. You can use one technique to capture the flag all three times, or you can use any combination.

Regardless of what technique you use, attack and kill the two enemy players roaming in the center of the map first.

> *Enemy players are highly vulnerable to the Laser Rifle at long range. The Disk Launcher is also a good weapon to use against them. Be sure to use your jump jets and strafe from side to side as you shoot them.*
>
> *After capturing the flag for the first time, a new enemy will appear in the vicinity of the flag. Kill him before taking the flag again. After capturing the flag a second time, a final enemy will appear. Kill him as well.*

To capture the flag with the "speed" technique, outfit yourself in Light Armor and an Energy Pack. Run toward the enemy base, dodging and jetting to avoid the two Fusion Turrets that guard it. Take the flag and keep running! Return to your base and touch the flag to yours.

> *The speed technique is pretty hard, especially for a newcomer. Don't be discouraged if you fail; those Fusion Turrets are nasty.*

The stealth approach involves Light Armor and a Jammer Pack. Approach the enemy base, turn on the Jammer Pack when the Fusion Turrets start shooting at you, and grab the flag. Then get out of the area quickly before your energy runs out and the Jammer Pack stops working.

> *The stealth approach is easiest for the beginner.*

Finally, the power approach involves taking Heavy Armor, an Ammo Pack, and a Heavy Mortar. Approach the two Fusion Turrets and destroy them with several low-trajectory Mortar shots apiece. It may take a couple of tries to get the knack of hitting the Turrets. But once both are gone, you can approach the flag at your leisure.

Fig. 7-10. After leveling both Fusion Turrets with low-trajectory Mortar fire, you can come and go as you please without worrying about turret fire.

This mission is easy because there's no pressure on your flag. Bear in mind that in a real Capture the Flag game, enemy players will actively try to steal your flag.

Also, in a real game, you can count on much more resistance as you approach an enemy base. Human players reappear a moment after you kill them. So you'll never be able to clear a path to the enemy base that's completely free of all resistance as you did in this mission. You'll always have enemies to contend with, so you'll need to learn to play under pressure.

Mission 6: Towers

This mission requires you to take three towers defended by computer-controlled enemies and turrets. As with CTF, there are several ways to tackle the mission. Here's one.

As the mission starts, you'll find yourself near the middle of the map. Your first waypoint is Tower 1, off to the west. Approach it and kill the computer-controlled player that comes out to greet you.

Enter the tower, ignoring the ELF Turret that zaps you on the way in. It'll drain your energy but won't deal massive damage if you keep moving. Touch the spinning trigger block to capture the tower. Now you don't need to fear that ELF Turret anymore.

Fig. 7-11. The first tower is almost due west.

Fig. 7-12. There's a Laser Rifle and Energy Pack on a ledge inside this tower. You'll need to jet quite high to get up there, preferably starting from inside the tower itself.

While inside the tower, look up. Note that there's a ledge up high. You can jet up there to collect some healing items, an Energy Pack, and a Laser Rifle. Feel free to drop your Blaster (by arming it, then pressing Ctrl *+* W*) and take the Laser Rifle in its place. You can then easily snipe the remaining computer players with the Laser Rifle.*

Now head south toward the second tower. Kill the lone, computer-controlled player guarding it, preferably at a distance with the Laser Rifle, then approach. Strafe as you get close to dodge the Fusion Turret that guards the tower. Touch the trigger block to capture the tower.

Finally, approach the third tower, which is located due north. Snipe the computer-controlled player patrolling this tower's roof. Then get inside, again strafing to avoid the Fusion Turret guarding it. Descend to the lower level and touch the trigger block to win the mission.

> *As with CTF, bear in mind that in a real Towers mission, you'll need to play defense so the enemy can't take back your towers.*

Mission 7: Retrieval

You start out in a base in the western half of the map. The structure containing the three flags you must retrieve lies to the east.

First, go to your base's Inventory Station and equip yourself. For speed's sake, the combination of Light Armor and Energy Pack is recommended— but you can take anything you'd like.

Proceed toward the waypoint. As you approach it, you'll need to kill a computer-controlled player. The structure with the flags in it has no entry at ground level, so to get inside, you must jet up into it.

Fig. 7-13. To the east lies the flag depository. You'll have to make three trips there.
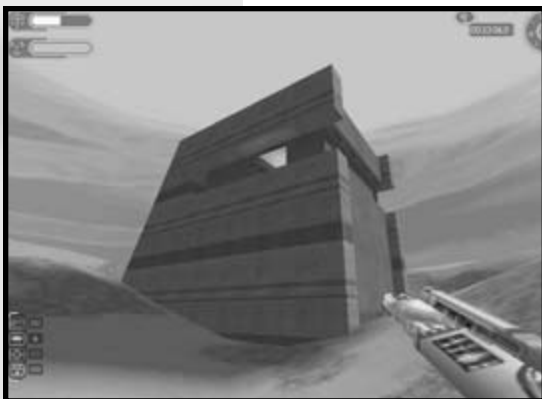
Fig. 7-14. You'll need to use your jets to get inside.

Grab the first flag you see inside, which is called the Tyantic Flag. Take it back to your base and place it on one of the three pedestals located next to the Inventory Station. Heal yourself at the Inventory Station if necessary.

Return to the flag structure and jet inside. Go deeper into the structure. You'll need to kill another enemy, and then you can collect a second flag, called the Orion Flag. Return it to your base and put it on a pedestal.

> *Interior combat is a bit different from exterior combat. There's less room to maneuver. Learn to pop out from behind corners and then quickly retreat.*
>
> *Use the Disk Launcher or Grenade Launcher to kill the enemies you encounter inside.*

Finally, go to the flag structure one last time and kill a final enemy whom you'll encounter deep inside it. Now you can collect the third and final flag, called the Cyltic flag. Return it to your base, place it on a pedestal next to the others, and you'll win.

Mission 8: Destroy

By now you're familiar with the basics, so this should be an easy mission.

You start out next to a base with an Inventory Station. Equip yourself as you please; as usual, we recommend Light Armor, an Energy Pack, and a Laser Rifle for expediency's sake.

Proceed due west toward your first waypoint. It's guarded by a single defender; snipe the defender with your Laser Rifle and proceed. Destroy the Solar Panel at this base with repeated weapons fire.

All three of your targets have a single defender, but the targets are very close to one another. So it's possible that a second enemy will attack you as you deal with the first target. If this is the case, realize that it's just the defender from one of the other targets.
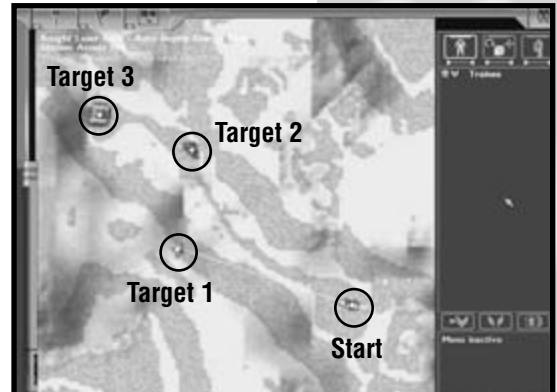
Fig. 7-15. Your three targets are located relatively close to one another.

Nearby is your second waypoint, a small base defended by another computer-controlled player. Gun down this player and enter the base. You'll see a Portable Generator. Destroy the Generator and move along.

Don't bother trying to destroy the Pulse Sensor on top of this base; it's very difficult to accomplish if you don't have a Heavy Mortar.

Fig. 7-16. Your enemies are vulnerable to long-range Laser Rifle fire.

The third waypoint marks the spot of the final target. Approach it and kill the enemy patrolling nearby. Then enter the base and shoot the Primary Generator located inside. It's sitting up on a ledge, so be sure to look up.

Once you've destroyed this item, the mission is a success.

Overview

These training missions have taught you several valuable skills, but they can't prepare you for the speed and chaos of a real multiplayer game. You won't be fighting against predictable computer-controlled enemies that patrol in circles and don't always notice you at long range. You'll be up against real humans who can and will victimize you in the same way that you victimized those AI-controlled foes.

If any aspect of these missions—the jumping, the vehicle piloting, the gunnery—seems difficult to you, play the missions several times over. Play until every task is easy, and you can win without losing a single life. When you've reached that point, you aren't necessarily ready to be effective in a multiplayer game. But you'll at least have a firm grasp on the basics.

Getting Started in Multiplayer Games

Starting out in a multiplayer game of *Tribes* can be brutal. This chapter suggests a method for getting through your first few games.

Note that the advice in this chapter isn't geared toward making you an effective player; that comes later. All this chapter does is suggest ways to experiment, learn, and gain as much as possible from your first few games. Subsequent chapters deal with the larger task of honing specific skills.

Understand your Connection

Before you join a game of *Tribes,* consult the section of your manual entitled Ping and Lag. It explains what ping and lag are, and how they'll affect your game experience.

You don't need to worry much about these factors if you're playing over a LAN. And you've got no worries if you're connected to the Internet with a dedicated digital line (more on that in a moment). However, most Internet denizens use modems to connect to *Tribes.* If you're one of those unlucky souls, it's important to learn how ping and lag can affect (and even dominate) your game experience.

Interpret Your Ping Numbers

Establish an Internet connection before launching *Tribes.* Then launch the game, select Play Game, and select a name and appearance for your character. Next, select Join Multiplayer Game, and *Tribes* will automatically "ping" all available Internet servers.

There are multiple columns of server information (Figure 8-1), including Server Name, Number of Players, and Ping. The ping number is expressed in milliseconds, with lower numbers indicating faster connections.

If you're using a modem connection, the best you can usually hope for is a ping less than 300. Pings around 150 are sometimes possible under near-perfect conditions, but anything better than that is unlikely for a modem.

If you're using a non-modem connection to the Internet, you'll see much better performance. Your ping on some servers is likely to be less than 100.

As stated in the game manual, low ping usually means less lag and a faster game. This isn't always the case, but it's generally true. Let ping play a major role in which servers you choose. If you choose servers where you have low ping, you're much more likely to hold your own and enjoy yourself.

Fig. 8-1. Lower ping numbers are better. The numbers you see here are fairly typical for a decent modem.

Improve your Connection

With a modem, it's pretty much guaranteed that you won't get a good ping for every available server. You'll only get consistently good pings (under 300) to servers that are either physically close to you, or have particularly fast connections to the Internet. Learn to stick with these servers.

ENHANCE YOUR MODEM CONNECTION

If your connection to every server is poor—in other words, it's always over 300—you should take steps to improve it. Here are a few possibilities.
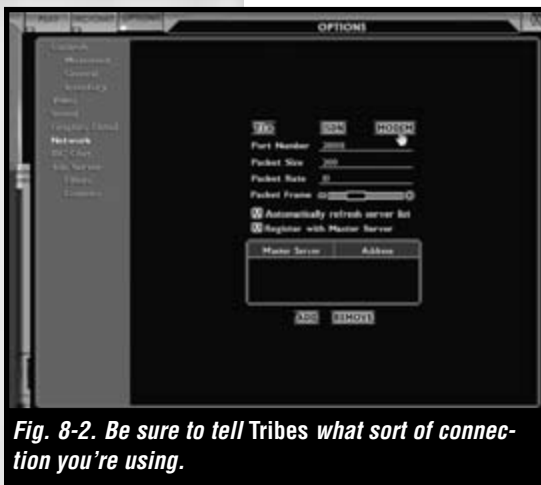
Fig. 8-2. Be sure to tell Tribes what sort of connection you're using.

First, select the Options tab from the top of the *Tribes* main menu, select Network, and then click the Modem button (Figure 8-2). This tells *Tribes* that you're using a modem so that it sets certain internal values to make the game experience smoother for you.

This alone won't always help. There are several other potential problems, and most of them require money to fix. Furthermore, it's hard to tell where the problem really lies. So it's possible to fix one or more problems without really getting to the heart of the matter. But in case you're interested, here are the possibilities.

First, it helps to have a good modem. High-end, 56k U.S. Robotics modems are always a good bet. Low-end modems tend to have more trouble maintaining fast Internet connections.

Next, you need to dial in to an ISP (Internet Service Provider) that uses good, quality modems. If you're in the market for an ISP, ask prospective services how new their equipment is, and what sort of

modems they use. Since your modem is actually dialing into a modem at your ISP, the quality of both modems matters. And if both modems are roughly the same model, from the same manufacturer, so much the better.

> *It also helps if your ISP's modems—the modems you're dialing into—are physically close to your home.*
> *The first three digits of your dial-up number usually tell the story. If they match the first three digits of your home phone number or belong to an area close to your home, you're in good shape.*

Also, the phone wiring in your home can be a problem. If you hear lots of clicking or buzzing whenever you talk on the phone, consider rewiring your phone jacks (if you know how). Or have someone else do it (if you can afford it). This not only improves the quality of your voice calls, but it helps smooth out your modem connections as well.

GET A DIGITAL LINE

The modem solutions discussed above pale when compared to digital Internet connections. A large and growing number of areas around the country offer some form of digital subscriber line. This provides a faster, cleaner, and superior connection to the Internet than a modem can.

Of these solutions, ISDN offers the least bandwidth, but it's still superior to a modem, and your ping is guaranteed to improve dramatically. The downside is that it's significantly more expensive than a modem, and it can be a pain to install.

Newer technologies include the super-fast DSL (Digital Subscriber Line). This comes in several varieties, like ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) and SDSL (Symmetric Digital Subscriber Line). Cable modems, offered by your local cable company, are also extremely quick.

If a DSL or cable modem service is available in your area, you might want to consider it. These services are an investment, however, so you might have to do some soul-searching to decide whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

Of course, these services may be unavailable in your area. Or they might be out of the question because of their cost. In these cases, you can always try to install *Tribes* on the computers at work or at school. Then you can play on the local area network, or on the super-fast Internet connection that most universities and large businesses possess.

Fig. 8-3. Learning your objectives is the first step. Ignore them, and you're doomed to confusion.

Learn your Objectives

When you finally connect to a multiplayer game, you should first go to the Objectives screen of your armor's built-in PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). This screen in reached by pressing ⬡, assuming that you didn't reconfigure the key.

Look at your objectives. Do your best to genuinely understand them. And note that in most games, there

are no points awarded for killing members of the other team. That's just something you'll do as you pursue the mission's larger goals.

When you're finished evaluating your mission goals, it's time to visit the Commander Screen.

Study the Map

Now press [C] to activate the Commander Screen, which is dominated by a large map. This is where you'll get a sense of what the terrain looks like and figure out your next move.

Locate Yourself

The first task is to locate yourself on the map. You're the green wedge. If you aren't immediately visible, zoom in on parts of the map where there are large concentrations of friendly teammates and objects. You could very well be somewhere in the mess, and zooming in will reveal your location.

Fig. 8-4. Try to figure out where all the important stuff is, and what your teammates are up to.

Look for Key Features

After locating yourself, look for key objects like bases and towers. Your base, if you have one, isn't labeled as such on the map. But you can figure out where it is. It'll have a high concentration of friendly objects in it, and it'll probably have a big Pulse Sensor whose arc is visible on the map.

If your team has a base, so does the enemy team. You can bet that it's the big structure on the opposite side of the map.

If there are towers in this mission, they'll also be clearly visible. Miscellaneous structures will also appear.

If you're unclear as to what a particular structure is, the easiest solution is to run there and look at it. Sure, you'll get killed a few times as you do this. But it's better to get killed now and figure out where everything is, rather than later, when you're trying to make a difference.

Note Teammate Positions

As you observe the map, watch your teammates. Particularly, watch what they're doing. If they're scattered around the map, separate from one another and attacking enemies individually, you're on a bad—or a skilled but highly individualistic—team. Regardless, you'll know not to expect much cooperation.

If your teammates are moving around in bands, however, and appear to be holding key locations on the map, you've probably joined an organized team.

Approach your Base

After absorbing all this information, you should turn your attention to your base. If it's a game with towers but no bases, focus on a tower that your team currently possesses. Locate it on the map and command yourself to defend it. This will place a waypoint marker on your HUD Compass, making it easy to get there.
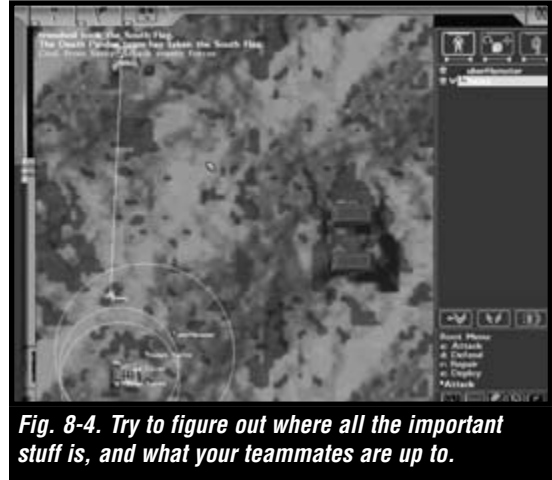
Now leave the Commander Screen and follow the green triangle on your compass until you reach your base. If your team is relatively skilled, it'll probably be defended by numerous teammates; there won't be many enemies nearby. If your team is bad, or if the base just happens to be under siege at the moment, there'll be mayhem all around. Do your best to ignore it.

Find an Inventory Station

Most bases have an Inventory Station. If the base doesn't have one, you're probably at a tower instead of a true base. (Towers are structures that start the game as neutral entities and can change hands many times over the course of play. They don't always have Inventory Stations.) Or you could just be in a rare mission where Inventory Stations are absent.

> *Never spend more than a moment or two at an Inventory Station, especially if it's in demand. Establish Favorites lists in missions where Inventory Stations are plentiful, or in single-player training missions. That way, you don't have to create them when you're in a tense situation.*

Fig. 8-5. Go select Light Armor at an Inventory Station.

Switch into Light Armor

Assuming that you manage to find an Inventory Station, approach it and buy Light Armor. If you previously created a list of favorites that includes Light Armor, buy those favorites now. Otherwise, just buy the Light Armor and get out of the way. After all, your teammates will be itching to use the Inventory Station too.

Study the Base

Now explore your base or tower. This will be easy due to the agility of your Light Armor. You won't have to deal with the sluggish speed and clumsiness of the heavier armor types.

Run laps around the base and learn it by heart. There'll be a lot to see if it's a large base, and not much to see if it's a small base. Explore for as long as it takes to memorize how to get around, and where the important items—Inventory Stations, turrets, flags—are.

Study the Base's Exterior

When you're done exploring the inside of the base, study the exterior as well. Note every entrance to the base. Also, note any significant features nearby. Is there a vehicle bay? Are there hilltops that attackers tend to congregate on and lob Heavy Mortar shells at your base? Is it a floating base, or is it firmly set on the ground?

Play Defense

Now that you know what your base looks like, both inside and out, you're ready to play some rudimentary defense.

Switch Back to Medium Armor

First, return to the Inventory Station and purchase Medium Armor. Your Light Armor is highly mobile, but it isn't the best choice for defense, at least for a beginner. Light Armor is fragile, and you probably aren't skilled enough to make full use of its agility yet. It's better to stick with the more durable Medium Armor. (Heavy Armor is frustrating for a beginner because it's so hard to get around in.)

Man the Interior

The easiest form of defense for a beginner to play is point-of-attack defense, where you physically stand near a point of enemy attack. If you're defending a base or tower, you can choose to guard one of its entrances. Or if you're guarding a flag, you should stay near the flag.

Defense is a fine art, and it's discussed more in Chapter 9. For now, just try to gun down enemies who get too close, meanwhile staying near your base. If you stay near your base, your team's turrets are likely to help you fight—plus, you're likely to have teammates nearby.

Fig. 8-6. Play defense. Don't worry about the fine points; just blast any enemy who gets too close to your goal.

Pursue Attackers

Attackers intent on destroying your base won't necessarily come after you. Instead, you'll have to chase them. Practice chasing them around if they don't initiate combat.

Experiment

After playing defense for awhile, switch gears. You may be tempted to stick with defense for now and continue to get the hang of it. But it's best to explore just a bit more so you can experience a number of different situations. Remember, the faster you try out different roles, the faster you'll learn about the game environment.

Try Different Armors

First, experiment with different armor types. Try to play defense in Light Armor and Heavy Armor and see how they affect your ability to defend. Again, don't worry if you don't seem to be too effective; you're just gaining experience and learning about the game.

Don't dismiss any armor type, even if you hate it at first. All three armor types have their place. None is better than the other, though some armors are better suited to certain roles and situations.

Experiment with Weapons Sets

Also, buy various weapons and play around with them. Practice shooting at immobile objects at first, then try to gun down enemies. Some weapons, like the Disk Launcher, are easy to grasp. Others, like the Grenade Launcher, are more difficult to fire properly. Watch the arc of your shots and try to predict where they'll land.

Attack the Enemy

Finally, as your last exercise, you should go attack the enemy. You'll probably fail miserably, but that's okay. By doing this now, you'll see what you're up against, and the offensive techniques outlined in Chapter 11 will make more sense to you.

Fig. 8-7. A few attacks on the enemy base—even hopeless ones—give you a taste of how hard it is to play good offense.

Onward

The next few chapters discuss various roles that you can play in *Tribes,* from defense to offense, from midfielder to commander. Keep reading for specific tips and tactics.

9

Defense Primer

Defense is a crucial role in any game except for pure "deathmatch" levels, where the only goal is to rack up kills. Other game types all feature objects and locations that must be defended if your team is to win.

Defense is also the best role for a beginning player. Not only is it vital, but it's relatively easy from both a conceptual and a skill standpoint. Conceptually, it's easy because your goal is to defend something—and that's it. There's less decision making involved than with offense. Also, defense typically requires less skill than many other roles. You're in your own territory, and you have the benefit of friendly turrets and teammates to assist you.

Still, that doesn't mean that defense isn't challenging. Try to hold down the fort against a barrage of Heavy Mortar fire. Or try to defend your flag from an extremely skilled raider in Light Armor and an Energy Pack. You'll soon see what we mean.

Keep reading to learn the fundamentals of playing defense.

Perimeter Defense vs. Point-of-Attack Defense

There are many ways to approach defense, but for clarity's sake, we're going to emphasize two: perimeter defense and point-of-attack defense. We'll also look at a hybrid or all-purpose defensive style, which uses elements of both perimeter and point-of-attack styles.

Point-of-Attack Defense

Point-of-attack defense is easy to grasp. It involves locating the object or structure you're trying to defend, staying close to it, and killing anyone who gets too close. There are numerous fine points to grasp, and numerous ways to make yourself more effective. We'll talk about these later in the chapter.

Point-of-attack defense typically takes place indoors, though it can be useful in certain outdoor situations as well. It's usually best when the defender wears Medium or Heavy armor, which absorbs lots of punishment and presents a formidable challenge in enclosed spaces.

Perimeter Defense

Perimeter Defense involves defending your objective from a distance. Instead of letting enemies get close to the object or location being defended, perimeter defenders array themselves a fair distance from the objective. Then they harass or intercept enemies before they get too close.

Most commonly, perimeter defenders station themselves between their objective and the enemy base since that's where most enemies tend to come from. But perimeter defense is most effective when there are defenders on all sides, encircling the objective so that nothing can break through and take it.

Medium and Light armor are common choices for perimeter defense because this defensive style involves interception and pursuit.

All-Purpose Defenses

Finally, it's possible to play a hybrid defensive role, which we'll call all-purpose defense. This is useful when you're the only person defending a particular objective, or when you're in a game with very few players. When playing this type of defense, you can start out as a perimeter defender. Then you gradually retreat and become a point-of-attack defender as the onslaught comes toward you.

Mastering Point-of-Attack Defense

Point-of-attack defense is the most *obvious* defense. If you're supposed to defend a flag, you stand right by it; if you're supposed to defend a base, you wait inside it. But as with all useful techniques, you have to step beyond the obvious if you want to be truly great at it. Here are some guidelines for the would-be point-of-attack defender.

Fig. 9-1. Point-of-attack defense is easy to play but difficult to master.

When to Use It

When should you play point-of-attack defense? Here are a few suggestions.

First of all, point-of-attack defense is seldom necessary in spots that aren't focal points of the mission. For example, if your mission is to capture towers, very few enemies will bother attacking your team's base. Defend those towers, not the base! Since your teammates will automatically reappear near the base whenever they're killed, you're sure to have a few players wandering around there at most times. That's good enough if the enemy isn't making an effort to wreck your base.

Next, understand that point-of-attack defense is very effective in enclosed areas, especially in large bases and areas with heavy fortifications like Plasma Turrets. It's less effective in small structures and in open areas. If you're trying to defend a flag that's sitting right out in the open, for example, point-of-attack defense is a lousy idea. Enemies can shoot at you from all angles, picking you off at long range, and then run in and steal the flag after dispatching you.

Similarly, if you're defending a small tower by yourself, with only a few turrets guarding the area, pure point-of-attack defense usually won't work. The tower is lightly fortified and offers very little protection. So once the enemy knows you're in there, it's an easy matter of using Heavy Mortar shells or grenades to flush you out. These situations demand a more active, all-purpose defense.

> *Point-of-attack defense is best in big games with lots of players, where key objects and locations have multiple defenders. In these cases, a single point-of-attack defender in Heavy Armor can make a big difference against enemies who manage to sneak through.*

Who Should Use It

There should seldom be more than one person on pure point-of-attack defense—for example, right next to the flag, or inside the base. The others should take a more active role, playing perimeter defense. That way, most enemies won't reach the point-of-attack defender in the first place.

In missions featuring particularly big bases with multiple entrances, it may be desirable to have point-of-attack defenders guarding every entrance. However, in most cases these defenders could be of more use in a perimeter defense or all-purpose defensive role. They should aggressively take on enemies and hold onto turf instead of hiding indoors.

Effective Weapons and Armor

If you're playing pure point-of-attack defense, guarding a small, enclosed area for an extended period of time, you should probably wear Heavy Armor. Enclosed areas minimize the maneuverability of players in Light Armor, but they focus explosions and weapons fire, making Heavy Armor's durability a real asset.

Medium Armor is also good, especially if you're planning on moving around a little, and possibly playing point-of-attack at more than one spot. For example, you're guarding one entrance to your base, but you know that a major attack is about to hit a different entrance. If you're wearing Medium Armor, you can get to the trouble spot faster.

So, you'll probably be using Heavy Armor, and the enemies you'll be facing probably won't be in Heavy Armor. Therefore, you should use big, damaging weapons that can deliver a beating at close range. Since you're well protected, you needn't worry too much about keeping yourself alive.

Fig. 9-2. The Heavy Mortar is an effective room-clearer.

Good choices for indoor fights are Disk Launchers, the Plasma Gun, and even the Heavy Mortar. Grenade Launchers are great for taking out enemies who are hiding around corners, and for pinning enemies in the middle of several explosive threats.

The Heavy Mortar is an ideal, last-ditch weapon. If your enemy is going to beat you, lob down a shell and hope it takes both of you out. If you're both killed, you're likely to reappear nearby, and your enemy will probably reappear in his team's territory. So you'll have effectively foiled his assault.

Effective Techniques

The following suggestions will help you improve your point-of-attack skills. Even the most stalwart of defenders should read them.

USE EXISTING DEFENSES

It's crucial that you pick a good spot for defense. Just because you're defending a flag doesn't mean you have to stand right on top of it. And just because you're defending an entrance doesn't mean you have to stand in the doorway.

The ideal defensive spot is somewhere that an automated defensive item can help you out. For example, many bases have one or more Mini-Fusion Turrets (otherwise known as Sentinels)

Fig. 9-3. This Sentinel turret will alert the defender to intruders by popping up.

located near their entrances. If you're guarding such an entrance, stand in a place where you can't be seen by intruders, but you *can* see the turret. Since Mini-Fusion Turrets use internal motion detectors, they can't be jammed. Thus, watching the turret will *always* let you know that an enemy is approaching.

Of course, the enemy might use the "advance, then halt, then advance again" technique to sneak past the Sentinel. But you'll know immediately because the Sentinel will pop out but not fire. Wait a moment as the Sentinel retracts, then pops out again as the attacker creeps in still further. Then run around the corner and attack with a Disk Launcher! You'll startle the enemy who'll be forced to either stand and take the abuse, or run and get mowed down by the turret.

> *External turrets can be of use, too. Always try to situate yourself near defenses of some variety so they can help you out as you defend your position.*

MAXIMIZE SURPRISE VALUE

If you're wearing Heavy Armor, you want to position yourself in spots where you'll surprise the enemy. You don't want opponents to see you down a long hallway. Instead, you want them to turn a corner, and wham! You're in their faces at point-blank range.

Therefore, you should either hide just around a sharp corner, or in part of a room that's not immediately visible to someone entering. So for example, you don't want to stand in full view of a doorway. Instead, you want to stand off to the side of the doorway, hugging the

Fig. 9-4. Stand beside the doorway, not in full view of it, so that enemies won't see you until they've entered.

wall, so that enemies can't see you before they enter the room. Or, if there's a balcony above the entrance, stand up there. You can then safely drop Grenades from above.

Once your enemy enters the area, attack first. The element of surprise, plus your Heavy Armor, should carry the battle.

BLOCK THE EXITS

Heavy Armor takes up lots of space. This can be a problem if you're wearing it because it can be difficult to traverse narrow spaces, but it can also be an asset. You can block a narrow hallway or

doorway if you're wearing Heavy Armor. This can trap a lightly armored foe whom you can pound into oblivion. Be aware of this, and do your best to make the most of your size.

DON'T GET ANXIOUS

You might get into a standoff where your enemy is behind a corner or down a hallway, and both of you know that the other is there. But don't get anxious and run into his line of fire. If you positioned yourself well, you're still between the enemy and his goal. Just let the fight come to you, and even gradually retreat if necessary.

Enhance the Defense

If you're truly serious about playing point-of-attack defense, you'll place extra defenses in the spot you're trying to defend. This is particularly important when you're wearing Heavy Armor and facing nimble foes. The extra defenses give them more to deal with, so they can't focus all their attention on evading your shots.

You should never play point-of-attack defense without heavily fortifying your base, plus the area around your base if you have enough time. Those extra defenses will pay off handily, dispatching careless enemies and weakening others to the point where you can finish them off easily.

DROP THE STATION

If there isn't an Inventory Station right next to the spot you're defending, grab one and slap it down. This greatly speeds the process of placing defenses.

PLACE TURRETS

Next, buy several Remote Turrets and

Fig. 9-5. A Mobile Inventory Station near the flag makes it easy to place Remote Turrets quickly.

place them in the area you're trying to defend. Make sure they're facing in the direction you expect attacks to come from; that way they don't have to swivel around before they start firing.

Also, be sure to place them around corners, below ridges, or anywhere else that they they're likely to surprise the enemy. Just as you don't want the enemy to see you from afar, you don't want the enemy to see a Remote Turret either.

When you place Remote Turrets just around corners, stick them close to walls so that an attacker cannot see them without fully turning the corner. Optimally, place them in parts of a room that an attacker won't see the instant he or she walks in.

DEPLOY SENSORS AND JAMMERS

Remote Turrets have built-in pulse sensors, and thus they can be foiled by players with Sensor Jammer Packs. While you're busy throwing down Turrets, therefore, you should add a few Motion Sensors to the area. Motion Sensors are great because they pick up moving enemies, even if they're using jammers. Plus they work through walls—line of sight is not required. This means you can put them in highly protected locations (i.e. in hard-to-see nooks and crannies), and they'll still be effective.

Fig. 9-6. This Camera and Remote Turret combination is tough to beat.

Cameras are also great if you put them in the right spots. They'll lock onto enemies and cause turrets to keep firing at them despite jamming *and* despite whether they keep moving. That's ideal.

In addition to adding Motion Sensors and Cameras, throw down a jammer or two, especially in spots where you'll be spending some time. (Remember, jammers work on a line-of-sight basis, so you may need several of them if you want to cover a big area.) Jammers help conceal the fact that you're lurking inside the base, effectively disguising you from the enemy. Keep in mind that jammers jam friendly as well as enemy players. If you put one near your base, it will help conceal enemy players.

Change of Pace Techniques

Just standing in one area gets boring and predictable. Even if you don't intend to leave your base, there are things you can do to keep enemies on their toes.

If there's a Command Station nearby, use it occasionally. Take manual control of turrets and hose down attackers before they get close to you. If the turrets are sometimes left on automatic control, but sometimes controlled by a player, your enemies will never know what to expect from them.

Move around a little. If you were standing on one side of a doorway, move to the other side after killing an attacker. Chances are good that he'll be back again, and he'll expect you to be in the same place. Just changing your position slightly can go a long way toward confusing him.

Advanced Tricks

There are a number of subtle ways to improve your point-of-attack defense, many of which are best learned through trying rather than reading. But here are a few suggestions.

Use Remote Turrets in conjunction with Remote Cameras placed on the ceiling. Cameras are great indoors because you can point them down a hallway that invaders enter. They reveal an enemy to Turrets regardless of whether that enemy is moving or using a jammer.

Also, you can use Cameras to supplement the Sentinel turrets that guard the entrances to many bases. Invaders will run up and then stop, assuming that the Sentinel's built-in motion sensor will

lose sight of them as they stand motionless. But thanks to the Camera, they'll be in for a big surprise.

When selecting weapons, remember that the Disk Launcher is a good weapon of choice for taking down Light Armored enemies indoors. Most other weapons have relatively slow projectiles, and good players in Light Armor will make you miss.

If you're in an enclosed area, and you're a great shot with the Heavy Mortar, you can "trap" enemies in lighter armor with mortar shells. Fire one shell behind enemies to prevent them from backtracking; then fire one in front of them (near you). They'll be stuck between the two shells and will probably get blown up. You'll also be damaged, but if you're in Heavy Armor, you'll probably survive. Also, using a Shield Pack increases your survival chances greatly.

Fig. 9-7. Remote Cameras placed next to Sentinel turrets greatly enhance their effectiveness.

Mines can be a deadly addition to any defense. But the key is letting your teammates know where they are, and not mining areas that your teammates will be passing through constantly. Experiment with mines, and you'll find that they can add incredible punch to your defense.

The Final Word

Point-of-attack defense isn't appropriate for every mission, and you shouldn't have too many players doing it. But it can be invaluable for catching enemies who make it through the perimeter defense.

Mastering Perimeter Defense

In most missions, the majority of your defenders should be playing perimeter defense.

As mentioned earlier, while point-of-attack defense involves standing close to the object being guarded, perimeter defense involves guarding it from a distance.

A classic example of perimeter defense would involve a base located in a valley. If all the defenders were to play point-of-attack defense, they'd crowd into the base. But that would allow

Fig. 9-8. Perimeter Defense requires you to stay vigilant and intercept enemies well before they reach their goal.

attackers to run up to the base unharmed. They could then shell it with Heavy Mortar fire, set up Remote Inventory Stations nearby, and generally make themselves comfortable.

Instead, the defenders should play perimeter defense, spreading out on the hilltops surrounding the base and watching for enemies in all directions. When enemies do arrive, the perimeter defenders should harass and occupy them. They should first snipe with Laser Rifles and Blasters, then swarm the enemy and attack with closer-range weapons.

When to Use It

Perimeter defense is a great defensive style for just about every mission. It's most effective when you have several friends helping you out.

If you have four players on defense, three or even four should be perimeter defenders. However, if all four players are on the perimeter, it's important that they're experienced enough to watch for sneak attacks. But it's probably best to have at least one point-of-attack defender to stay at home and guard against stealthy raids.

> *Especially when you're defending a base, you have little to lose by charging and attacking well before the enemy gets to your base. That's because you're likely to reappear near your base after getting killed. So you'll be in a position to fight that same enemy again. If you're lucky, you'll even have time to buy your Favorites again.*

Effective Weapons and Armor

Perimeter defenders can use whatever armor and weapons suit the situation. The best choices are predicated on what the map is like and what tactics the enemy is using.

Regardless of the map, however, it's always good to have a couple of perimeter defenders in Light Armor with Energy Packs. These players can serve as defensive snipers, picking away at attackers with Laser Rifles before they even get close. These players can often disrupt major attacks well before they reach the critical stage.

Fig. 9-9. Perimeter defenders in Light Armor are useful for pursuing enemies intent on snatching your flag—or those that have it and are trying to flee.

These snipers are also highly mobile. So they're ideal for chasing enemies who manage to get into the base, steal the flag, or start causing other problems.

Medium Armor works well on the perimeter too, but you have to be smarter about being in position to intercept your foes. On maps where snatch-and-grab tactics work (for example, where your flag is sitting right out in the open), Light Armor is often better. But Medium Armor is a good choice if a few of the defenders already have Light Armor.

Finally, Heavy Armor can be useful, but as always, you need to have teammates nearby to support you. You'll be able to disrupt enemy advances with your Heavy Mortar, and you can take lots of punishment. But Heavy Armored players on perimeter defense tend to be vulnerable to sniper shots and other long-range punishment. Players in Heavy Armor might want to consider retreating into the base when they've taken serious damage.

> *Heavy Armor is most useful on perimeter defense when you're facing a slow, rumbling attack involving multiple enemies in Medium and Heavy Armor. It's least useful in defending against speed and stealth attacks because it's hard to keep up with enemies in Light Armor.*

Effective Techniques

Stay on the high ground surrounding the object you're defending. Periodically check the Commander Screen map, and also scan the horizon visually. If enemies appear at long range, snipe at them and alert your friends.

As enemies approach, multiple perimeter defenders should gather and attack. At least one defender should stay back and watch for attacks from other sides, however.

Tailor your defense to the attacks you're facing. If the enemy keeps approaching from a given point, you might want to place Remote Turrets or mines there for added defense. If the enemy constantly attacks in Light Armor, make sure you have enough Light Armored defenders available to give chase.
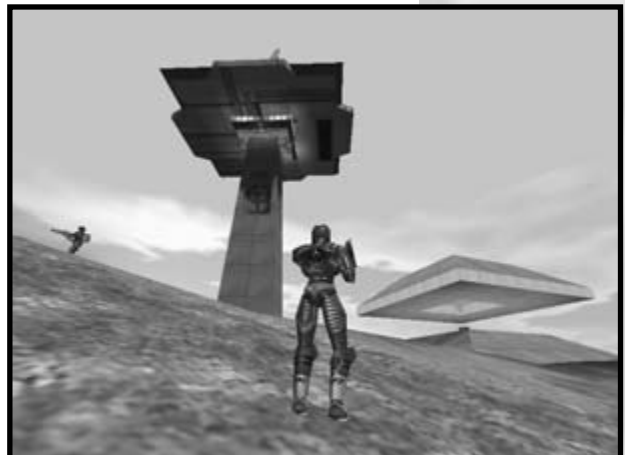
Fig. 9-10. Teamwork is a trademark of a good perimeter defense.

> *Remote Inventory Stations can be useful on defense, even though you're usually quite close to a base with a full-sized Inventory Station. They cut down on the time you'd otherwise take running back and forth from your post to the Inventory Station.*

Change of Pace Techniques

Instead of sniping at enemies and letting them know you're there, perimeter defenders can hide and even use Jammer Packs to conceal themselves from attackers. Then, when the attackers enter the base or get close to the objective, you can ambush them. This works best if the attackers are busy trying to deal with emplaced defenses such as turrets because it further distracts them.

Feel free to move out farther than usual if you think the enemy is getting accustomed to seeing you in a particular position. For example, if you've been standing on the same hill for quite some time, move to another hill that's closer to the enemy base. Then, when enemies approach, they won't expect to see you when you attack.

You should occasionally patrol the area around your base. Enemies often like to set up "mini bases" with Remote Inventory Stations and Sensor Jammers. And it's vital to root these out so they don't provide a staging area for constant attacks.

The Final Word

Perimeter defense is best when it includes a mix of armor types and weapons payloads. The one constant, however, is the need for fast, light snipers. These snipers can chase quick enemies that get too close. And they can brush back enemies that would otherwise park themselves at long range and fire Heavy Mortars to their hearts' content.

All-purpose Defense

All-purpose defense is a mixture of point-of-attack defense and perimeter defense. Essentially, it's a phrase for any defense where you spend some time outside, then spend some time inside.

All-purpose defense is most useful when you're the only defender at a particular location, or when you don't have much support.

An example of all-purpose defense would be a player in Medium Armor guarding a tower. When the coast is clear, the player spends time setting up Turrets and Motion Sensors outside the base. Then, as an enemy approaches, the player does battle, staying close to the defenses he or she has put up. Eventually, the player retreats into the tower if necessary, and continues the fight from inside.

Effective Weapons and Armor

You can be effective in any armor type if you're playing all-purpose defense. If you use Heavy Armor, a good technique is to stand on top of the structure you're defending. Next, lob Heavy Mortar shells at anyone who approaches. Then, drop down inside whatever you're defending to continue the fight.

Medium and Light Armor require different tactics. Since you don't have the durability of Heavy Armor, you'll want to stay outside more often, where you're most maneuverable. Follow and harass the enemy, but be careful if the fight progresses to a more enclosed area.

If you have the opportunity, you can even use Light Armor outside and then quickly switch to a heavier armor type after dashing inside.

Fig. 9-11. This defender in Heavy Armor can lob Heavy Mortar shells at incoming enemies, then aim down and defend the tower's interior if need be.

Effective Techniques

Since all-purpose defense combines elements of point-of-attack and perimeter defense, you should follow the rules of those defense types. When you're outside, use more of a perimeter defensive style. Either harass incoming enemies at long range with a Laser Rifle or Blaster, or hide and sneak up on them as they deal with emplaced defenses.

When the fight moves inside, employ more of a point-of-attack style. Make your stand in spots where you'll be supported by emplaced defenses. And try not to stand somewhere obvious, where you can be flushed out by Grenades. Your enemy will know you're there, so you've got to be some- where that's reasonably well protected. (If no such place exists, you should stay outside.)

Defense Overview

It doesn't matter whether you employ a point-of-attack defense, a perimeter defense, or a combina- tion thereof. You can rest assured that whenever you're playing defense, you're making a differ- ence. Defense is fundamental, but it's often overlooked by teams intent on attacking.

Remember, especially in capture-the-flag style games, you cannot lose if your defense holds through the entire game.

10

"Midfielder" Primer

Though offense and defense are the most clearly defined roles, you'll spend a lot of time on the in-between turf that separates key locations. You probably won't want to spend your entire game traversing this middle ground. However, there are valuable reasons to be there and valuable things to do there. This chapter is devoted to helping you be effective in that area.

The Midfielder Position

The "midfielder" role isn't one that most players take willingly. It's simply a necessary evil. To get somewhere, you have to travel across unclaimed tracts of land. Still, there's value to being in that unpopular middle area, if only because it puts you in position to play different roles quickly.

While in that middle area, you can perform reconnaissance, snipe at enemies, build infrastructure, destroy enemy infrastructure, and quickly move to defensive and offensive roles.
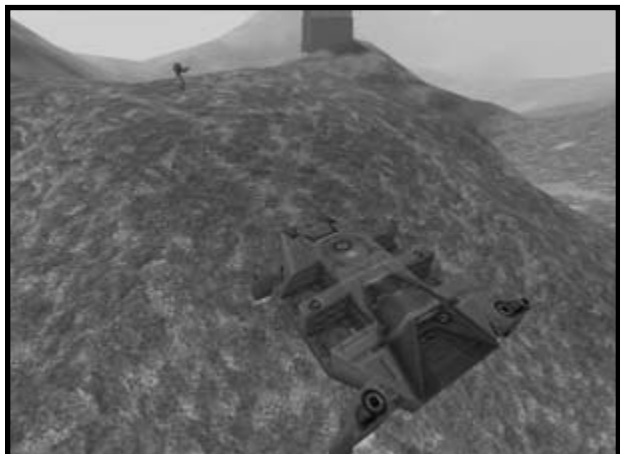
Fig. 10-1. There's a lot of territory out there. It's not just dead space; make it work for you.

Reconnaissance

The first valuable role performed by a midfield player is reconnaissance. Most maps are large enough that it's impossible to extend your team's sensor range across the whole thing. Thus, there's value in having players in the middle territory who are paying attention.

Recon is working best when it uncovers a major assault. This usually entails three or more attackers advancing as a group. Such attacks can be deadly if not picked up well before they reach your base.

When to use Reconnaissance

Nobody should play a pure recon role throughout an entire game; there are too many other valuable things you can be doing instead.

Rather, recon is something you should do while you're working on something else—like laying down a sensor network or proceeding toward an enemy base. Just keep your eyes open and watch the terrain you're crossing rather than single-mindedly trekking toward your goal.

When you do find something worth noting—usually a group of enemies—alert your teammates. It's important for everyone to be on the same page.

Tricks and Tips

Light Armor is far and away the best armor for recon, especially when paired with an Energy Pack. This configuration also lets you take on the role of sniper, something we'll discuss momentarily.

Jump jets are crucial to spotting enemies. Good players will often jet high into the air, spinning around the whole time. They can then look for enemies that would otherwise be hidden behind ridges or other prominent terrain features.

Also, players intent on scouting should periodically refer to their Commander Screen. Even stealthy attackers sometimes appear on the sensor network for a moment.
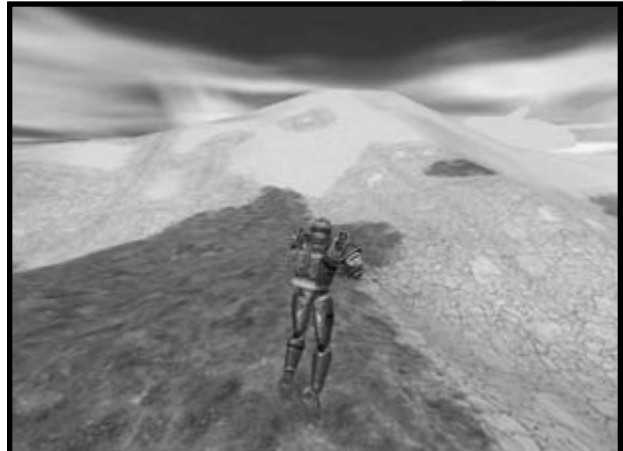
Fig. 10-2. Spin around in midair to get a good view of what's happening below.

Midfield Sniper

Another role—one that's more versatile than recon and worth spending some time at—is that of midfield sniper.

Defensive and offensive sniping serve obvious purposes, but midfield sniping can be equally profitable if you approach it with the right attitude. Here's a look at what you can do.

If your team is lacking adequate offense and defense, play one of those roles instead of midfield sniper. That's because mid-field sniping is pointless unless you've got a strong offense and defense.

Your role as midfield sniper is essentially to distract enemies rather than necessarily kill them outright. So it's important that there be teammates nearby to capitalize on the distraction. They can do this by attacking a base after you've distracted the defenders. Or they can clean up an assault team after you've made its members scatter with your sniper fire. But if those teammates aren't ready to help, you might as well join the attack or defense team.

Harass Defenders

Key enemy sites are likely to have a number of defenders standing around outside. These defenders get pretty comfortable if there's nobody around to pick on them. And pick on them you can, if you're playing the role of midfield sniper.

The key to this sort of sniping is to understand your role: Distract defenders, make them uncomfortable, force them to leave their ideal defensive spots. They may even run out and attack you. You aren't trying to invade the base; that's not going to work. You're trying to pave the way for your team's real attackers by disrupting the enemy defense.

Fig. 10-3. The defenders on this floating base will either have to take cover or chase you in order to stop the sniping.

If defenders try to pursue you, run away. Lure then away from their tasks. If they shift to another spot, move around until you can see them again. Just be as annoying as possible; you'll get them out of their normal game plan.

Take Out Makeshift Defenses

Defenders like to place deployable objects near their bases—Remote Turrets, Remote Jammers, Remote Inventory Stations, and so forth. If they do this properly, you won't be able to see these items from long range.

Defenders may be sloppy, however, or they may just want to place as many items as possible. In that case, some of those deployed items will be in full view of a sniper who's zooming in with an Image Enhancer. Since the Sniper Rifle is quite powerful, and since these deployable items are extremely fragile, you can often take them out with a single shot.

Destroying infrastructure in this way is very efficient. The enemy spent a good deal of time lugging a pack out and deploying it whereas you can destroy that object just by shooting at it.

Destroying makeshift defenses is often just as vital as harassing enemy defenders.

Fig. 10-4. Remote Turrets will fall with one well-placed sniper shot.

Disrupt Plodding Offensives

Every so often, your enemies decide to attack your base with power, not stealth or speed. They assemble an assault team, most of whom usually wear Medium or Heavy Armor, and start lumbering toward your base. One member of this team often carries a Remote Inventory Station. So when the team gets close to its destination, it can set up a "mini-base" of sorts.

Fig. 10-5. This group of enemies should be disrupted before they reach your base.

It's important to catch these sorts of attacks well before they reach your base. They can be extremely tough to deal with when they get to high ground and start shelling your base. In transit, however, they're vulnerable—especially if they have players in Heavy Armor.

Whenever you encounter such a group, alert your teammates and then start sniping at the heaviest armored players in the group. If their lightly armored companions are paying attention, they'll come attack you. Fly away and let them pursue you. You'll be surprised at what lengths some players will go to get a kill. They'll even abandon their pals in Heavy Armor and leave them vulnerable.

Hopefully your teammates will listen to you and pick on the less mobile members of the team while you distract the lighter members.

Infrastructure Builder

Another role you can assume is that of infrastructure builder. As with most mid-field roles, you probably don't want to spend *all* your time on this. But it's something you can do while working on other tasks.

Extend Sensor Range

Adding sensors to the map enhances your team's view of the battlefield. The more information each team member can gain by looking at his or her Commander Screen, the better informed your team's decisions will be.

Remote Pulse Sensors are the items of choice when establishing sensor networks that need to cover lots of ground. Remote Motion Sensors cover designated areas better than Remote Pulse Sensors. However, they cover a smaller radius.

Either deploy Remote Pulse Sensors on hilltops or just below hilltops. Generally they'll last longer if they're placed on the side of the hill facing your own base. Enemies won't see them unless they look down constantly as they approach.

Add "Surprise" Turrets

Adding the occasional Remote Turret to the open landscape helps keep the enemy on its toes. Turrets placed out in the open aren't as potent as those in enclosed areas. But if the enemy gets zapped by a Turret once, it'll have to be that much more cautious in the future.

Place Remote Turrets on ridges or slopes that face your base. That way, enemies won't see them while approaching and will be shot the moment they crest the hill. They're likely to be looking at your base instead of at the ground, so the turret might get in a few good shots.

Fig. 10-6. These Remote Turrets are just far enough down the slope that players coming from the other side won't see them.

Snipers can easily pick off remote Turrets placed on slopes facing away from your base. Avoid placing Turrets in such exposed areas as it seldom pays off.

Create Jamming Zones

Another valuable task is to create jamming zones with Remote Jammers. Specifically, it can be useful to place a line of Remote Jammers that leads toward the enemy base, enabling teammates to sneak up unannounced.

Note that the best place for these Jammers is off to the side rather than in a straight line from your base to the enemy's. The enemy is likely to guard the straight-line approach well. And it's likely to locate your players visually, despite the jamming, if they approach in such a direct route.

Infrastructure Destroyer

Another valuable role is that of infrastructure destroyer. Depending on how the enemy team operates, this can be a vital role or a worthless quest. Some teams won't bother placing many objects on the battlefield, and in this case, you're better off in some other role.

Scan for Unmarked Items

When you stumble upon a remote item placed on the map, it won't be immediately obvious what team it belongs to. Quickly check your map. If the item appears there and is green, it's yours. If it doesn't show up or it's labeled in red, it's the enemy's. Get rid of it!

If you happen to destroy an enemy Remote Jammer, quickly look at the map again. Items that were previously hidden may now be visible on the map.

Fig. 10-7. This Remote Inventory Station and Remote Jammer need to be destroyed.

Watch your Sensor Indicator

Say you're in a location where the main enemy Pulse Sensors shouldn't reach, yet your Sensor Indicator is flashing red. That means the enemy has placed an auxiliary Pulse Sensor somewhere. Look for it using the Sensor Indicator. By dropping down on various sides of a hill, you can determine what direction the Pulse Sensor is located in, and then go destroy it.

Jump for Better Perspective

Periodically jet straight up in the air and spin around, looking for suspicious objects and players. This will occasionally reveal a hornet's nest of enemy activity that you'd previously missed.

Watch for Gatherings

If the enemy tends to gather at a specific point or always approaches your base from a specific area, that's a good place to look for enemy gear. Approach cautiously and destroy anything you find. Occasionally you'll discover a full-fledged mini base, complete with Remote Inventory Station, Remote Jammer, and possibly even Remote Turrets.

Fig. 10-8. Craggy areas near your base are where the enemy typically drops Remote Inventory Stations.

Emergency Defender

When you're playing a midfielder role, you're free to go anywhere you'd like. And since you're probably in Light Armor, you can usually get there fast. This allows you to play the role of emergency defender. You can rush to the aid of any key position that's coming under heavy attack. Or you might intercept an enemy flag carrier who's making a break for his base.

Fig. 10-9. The map shows that the base is under attack. Time to head back and help out!

Don't be afraid to abandon the midfielder role. It's useful, but much of its use comes from its flexibility; you can help out wherever you're needed.

Situational Attacker

Just as you can jump in on defense, feel free to join a promising offensive if you're in position to do so. For example, occasionally you'll see a team of players in Heavy and Medium Armor lumbering toward the enemy base. It could use support from someone in Light Armor, to protect it from agile defenders. Go help its cause.

Similarly, you might see a number of teammates launching a full-scale attack on an enemy position. So you may want to sneak in from the rear and damage the target while its defenders are all occupied. This can be surprisingly effective, and often it'll complement your teammates' attack much more effectively than direct support.

> *Attacking an enemy position is a whole new role, which we'll deal with extensively in the next chapter.*

11
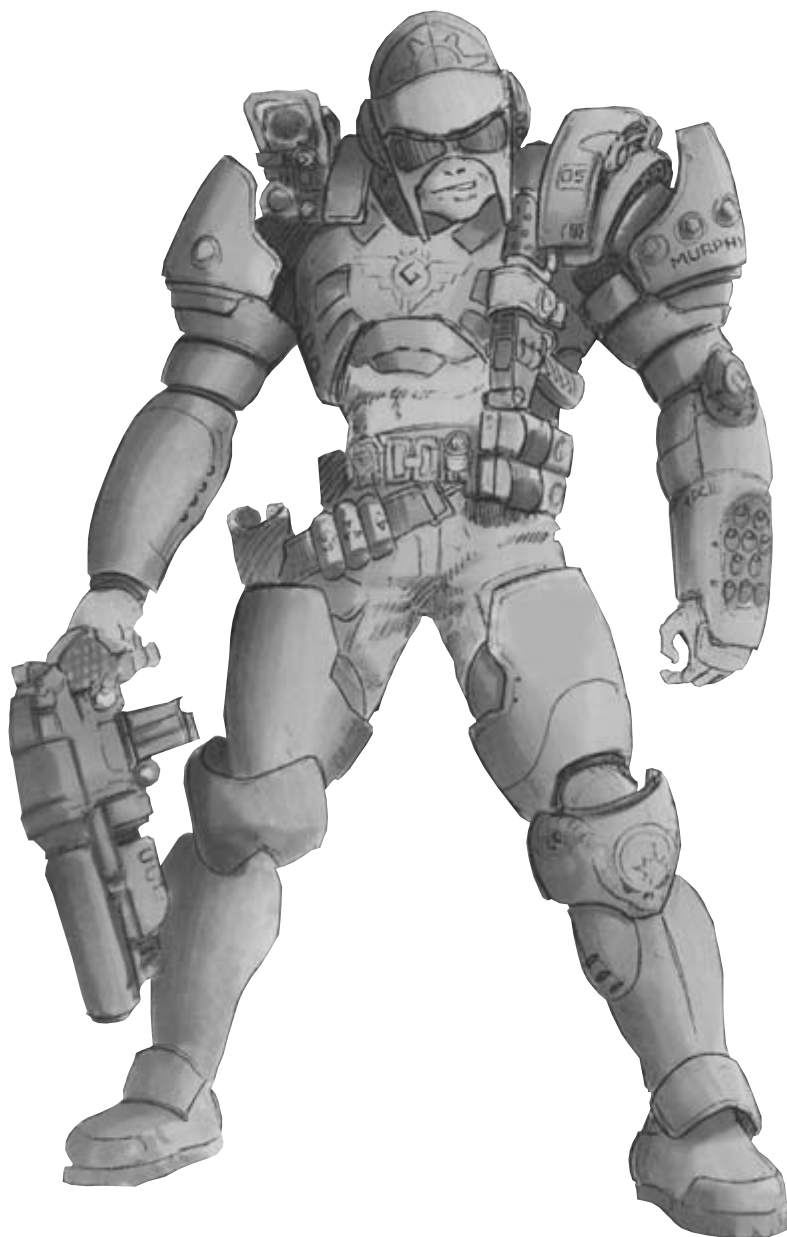
Assault Primer

Attacking a fortified enemy position ranks among the most difficult tasks in *Tribes*. Until you become familiar with the various turrets and sensors that guard most bases, you're prone to getting gunned down every time you get close. And that's without any human enemies in the area! Throw in a few stalwart defenders, and you've got a task that looks nearly impossible.

Attacking enemy bases never gets *easy,* but it does get easier. Keep reading for tips on how to infiltrate enemy strongholds and come away with your prize.

Preliminaries

Before you start smashing through enemy fortifications like they aren't even there, you'll need to master a few crucial skills.

Master the Defenses

First, you need complete knowledge of every item in the game world. You need to be able to distinguish different types of turrets from one another on sight. You also need to know what causes those turrets to fire, and how to avoid them. You shouldn't have to ask yourself what to do in any given situation; you should be able to instinctively react to the defenses you're facing. This means freezing in your tracks at the sight of a Sentinel turret or staying on the ground as you pass a Missile Turret.

You'll also do better if you have a good idea of how the enemy base or tower is laid out. You don't need a complete mental map. However, you should know how many entrances there are and what sorts of defenses lie beyond each entrance. You should also know roughly where the vital objects (flags, Generators) inside each base are. When in doubt, you can host a multiplayer game and explore the bases at your leisure without any interference. Or, if you want to learn in a real game situation, you can study your own base closely. There are usually minor differences between bases, but they're generally just that—minor. If you understand your own base's layout, you can bet that the enemy base is nearly identical.

Know your Goals

Know what you're trying to do before infiltrating an enemy stronghold. Until base raiding becomes second nature to you, the excitement of actually infiltrating enemy territory may have a tendency to obscure your real purpose. You'll be wondering what to achieve.

If you're trying to capture a tower, remember that your objective is to capture the spinning block at the tower's center. If you want to capture a flag, remember to do so without getting distracted once you're inside the base. If you plan on wrecking the enemy base, go right for the Generators.
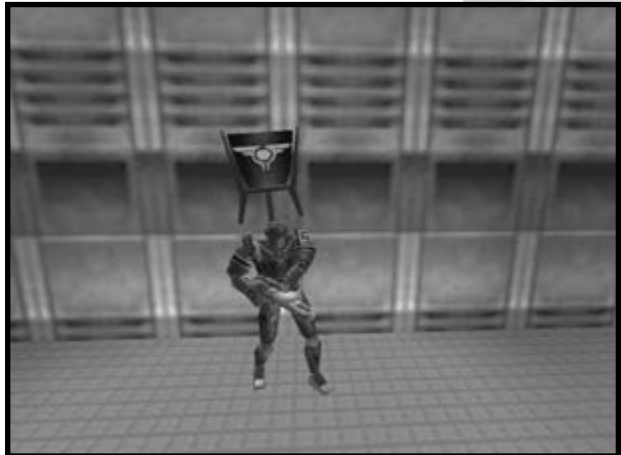
Fig. 11-1. What are your goals? Capturing a flag? Destroying a Generator? Figure it out before you attack.

Prepare Yourself

Once you know your goals, your choice of armor and equipment should become quite obvious. Are you trying to jet to the top of the enemy fort and drop through a ceiling hatch? Light Armor and an Energy Pack are a good choice. Maybe you're trying to take over a tower with a lone defender in Heavy Armor inside? A Grenade Launcher usually lets you soften up the tower from outside before charging in.

Think about what you're trying to achieve; then select armor and weapons that will help you attain your goals.

Observe the Enemy

The enemy's behavior and defensive style make a huge difference in what offensive tactics will work. For example, if the enemy base is defended by a few enemies in Heavy Armor, a speed or stealth raid might capitalize on their sluggishness. If large numbers of Light Armored enemies are holding down the fort, distraction and long-distance shelling might be useful.

Generally speaking, the more defenders stationed at the place you're attacking, the less likely that commando-style speed or stealth raids will work. All those enemies will see you and gun you down. Extremely well guarded spots will only fall to powerful strikes by large strike forces or a combination of power and sneakiness.

Stealth Attacks

Pure stealth raids are both exhilarating and rewarding. There's nothing better than sneaking up to an enemy base with

Fig. 11-2. Depending on where the defense has arrayed itself, you might want to adjust your tactics.

Sensor Jammer on, jetting to the top, dropping through a ceiling hatch, and sneaking past numerous turrets and defenses until you've reached your goal.

Of course, stealth attacks are also high-risk; once you're caught, you're usually in serious trouble. Of course, there's always a chance that you can run away—and you can always try again.

When to Attack with Stealth

Stealth attacks are most useful against lightly guarded targets and targets with multiple entrances. For example, a tower guarded by a single enemy is a good target. So is a massive base with multiple entrances, some of which may be poorly guarded.

Bad candidates for stealth raids include bases with only one entrance and bases that are swarming with defenders. You can use jamming to get yourself past any number of sensors. And if you're cautious, you can even sneak past a couple of human defenders. But generally speaking, if there are multiple enemies in the area, you're bound to be seen.

Fig. 11-3. This large craft, which is in fact an enemy base, has multiple entrances and is thus a good candidate for a stealth raid.

How to Proceed

Standard practice is to approach the target along a path that's at least partially shielded from Pulse Sensors. This means staying behind ridges and hills. Also, don't forget about the threat of visual detection.

When you must cross relatively open areas, use a Jammer Pack to cut down the risk of detection. Also, try to make sure that there are few enemies who might see you. (A Jammer Pack is usually required for pure stealth missions, but if the defenders are distracted or inattentive enough, it's not necessary.)
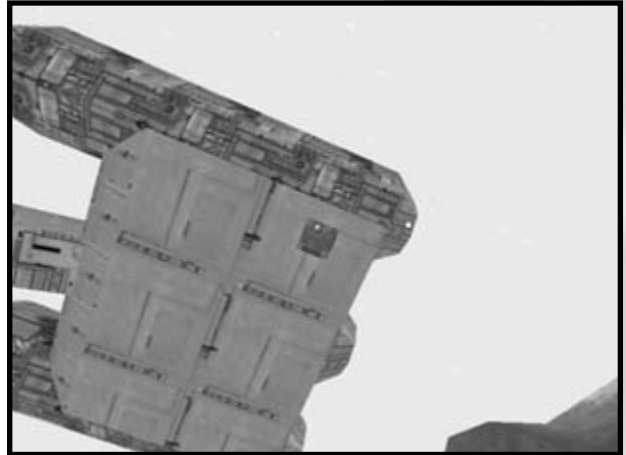
Fig. 11-4. Ceiling entrances, or entrances located beneath an enemy base, are ideal for stealthy attacks.

> *Don't hesitate to stop for awhile behind a hill or ridge and let your energy rise up to maximum. That way, you'll have a full charge for your Jammer Pack when you break cover.*
>
> *While you're under cover, occasionally pop up and scan the terrain you're heading into. Watch the movement patterns of your enemies. Do your best to avoid them.*

When you're near the target, scan it again. This may involve standing on a hilltop with Sensor Jammer engaged, giving the base a once-over with the Image Enhancer. Then drop back to let your energy get back to full.

> *If there are so many defenders that it's hard just to get near the base without being seen, stealth alone probably isn't the best approach. Try speed or power instead, as discussed later in this chapter.*

When you're ready, engage your Sensor Jammer (if you have one) and make your final approach on the target. If the target has multiple entrances, you often want to use the top one. Lower entrances usually swarm with defenders.

If all goes well, you'll be able to drop inside the enemy base.

Inside the Base

Inside the base, don't lose your head. Proceed as quickly as possible, but stop short near corners and junctions so you don't run full speed into an enemy's chest.

Deal with threats in the most convenient way possible. Sneak past Sentinel turrets and ignore objects that aren't vital to your task.

> *In most cases you should ignore targets that aren't central to your quest. Generators are an exception. If you happen upon Generators, you should probably blow them up, even if your main task is to capture a flag. This sends the base into turmoil and paves the way for more attacks.*

When you get to your goal, execute your task quickly and run, preferably back the way you came. After all, the way you came was clear the first time you did it, so it's likely to be clear again. Also, you know what to expect.

Variations

Any number of things can and will go wrong on a stealth mission. Here are some tips for overcoming adversity.

While it's best to be as quiet as possible, sometimes you'll need to take out enemy fortifications. For example, you might need to destroy a Remote Turret inside the enemy base. If you do, Grenade Launchers are the preferred weapon because they let you fire safely from around corridors.

If you get caught very close to your target, your two primary options are to flee or to wreck as much as possible. The former option works well if you aren't actually inside yet. It also works if you're

Fig. 11-5. Even if you can't accomplish your primary objective, such as escaping with the flag, you can at least deal some damage.

attacking a tower or small base that's more or less open to the air. The latter option is best if you're well inside a base and probably can't escape. If this is the case, start running like crazy while lobbing grenades and dropping mines if you can. Just try to wreck as many Inventory Stations and other useful objects as possible. That way, the enemy will at least have to spend some time repairing the damage.

Finally, note that while speed attacks work just fine with one player, two players in close coordination can be even better. With two players, you can efficiently destroy large enemy turrets (especially if one teammate has an ELF Gun). Also, you'll stand a chance if you run into a lone enemy inside.

> *Jammer Packs not only protect the wearer from sensors but also protect a small area around the wearer. Thus, if two teammates stick close together, they can both benefit from one player's Jammer Pack.*

Speed Attacks

Speed attacks, like stealth attacks, are often performed by a single player although having a partner or two can greatly assist you. Unlike the stealth attacker, who tries to hide from enemies at all costs, the speed attacker only hides until it's time to strike. He or she then uses the pure maneuverability of the Light Armor and Energy Pack combination to zip in and strike the target. The effectiveness of this technique varies greatly and depends largely on the circumstances.

When to Use Speed

Speed attacks are excellent for flag missions where the flags are sitting more or less out in the open. In these missions, sneaking all the way up to the flags is nearly impossible. Instead, you can sometimes use your blazing speed and jumping ability to snatch the flag and get away.

Speed attacks are also useful against large bases with multiple entrances, and targets that are currently under attack. In these cases, you rely on the enemy defenders being distracted or out of position. You then capitalize by blasting in from the opposite direction and making them pay.

You won't be able to capture and hold

Fig. 11-6. This mission, with its flags located right out in the open, leaves the door open for speedy raids.

an area with speed attacks. However, you'll sometimes be able to snatch a flag or destroy a Generator before the defenders manage to catch up.

Pure speed is not feasible in many situations, but speed combined with stealth or power can be deadly. The last major section of this chapter discusses the value of combination attacks.

Techniques

The essence of the speed attack is to catch enemies napping, out of position, or stuck in heavier armor than they should really be wearing.

Approach the enemy target with stealth, using ridges and hills as you would for a stealth attack.

When you get close to the target, blast your way up to it. Or you can hang around and wait for the defenders to shift until there's an open spot in the defense. Do your best to avoid detection, but if you are detected, don't sweat it. Use your jets to avoid getting shot, and go for the goal.

Once you do reach your goal, you'll need to be fast. If it's a flag, you need to be able to swoop down and take it in one pass. If it's a Generator, you need to shoot it rapidly with a Plasma Gun or other fast-acting weapon. You generally won't have much of a chance to destroy your target before the defenders get to you.

Improving the Speed Attack

The value of speed attacks often comes down to your raw skill with the jump jets and your ability to maneuver skillfully under pressure. If you're good, you might be able to do some damage. If you're lousy, you should keep practicing and stick to stealth or power attacks until you improve.

As with stealth attacks, don't try to force the issue if a particular spot is extremely well defended. Stealth attacks and speed attacks don't work too well against well-prepared foes. In these cases you need to combine your stealth or speed with power, as explained in the last section of this chapter.

Fig. 11-7. If the base is too well defended, pure speed attacks usually won't work.

Power Attacks

When Jammer Packs and nifty jump jet moves fail, power is necessary. A target that's defended by a large contingent is a tough nut to crack. You can't expect to take it by sneaking up to it in plain view of multiple enemies or by jetting into a hail of gunfire. In these cases, you need to present a legitimate threat and wear down the enemy defenses to the point where those first two attack types can succeed.

When to use Power

Use power attacks when the enemy has dug in and fortified heavily. Use them when defenders are swarming around your objective. In short, use them anytime that speed and stealth just aren't getting it done.

Don't bother with power attacks on locales that are poorly defended in the first place. If there's just one defender, shelling the base with heavy Mortar fire is overkill. Just take out the defender and proceed from there.

However, you should understand that when you're playing against a competent team, your main objectives will very rarely be poorly defended. They'll be extremely tough to approach, and power will be necessary.

Fig. 11-8. Shelling the enemy base from afar is a staple of many power attacks.

The Value of Teamwork

Power attacks require teamwork. Specifically, they require a crew of multiple attackers who hit the base at the same time. Ideally this crew includes players in several different types of armor. Heavy Armor wearers can shell the target if necessary. Medium Armor wearers act as all-purpose attackers, and Light Armor wearers provide mobility (and perhaps capitalize on weaknesses left by the defenders).

Flat-out attacking an enemy target by yourself isn't usually a great idea. You'll get killed by a crew of defenders if the other team is any good. Lone players can get away with stealth and speed raids, but they can't summon the power to break down enemy defenses.

Fig. 11-9. Without teammates at your side, your attack is likely to be a failure.

Approaching Correctly

It's hard to send a large group of players across the map without getting detected. Nevertheless, your group should still try to hide behind terrain features until revealing yourselves is absolutely necessary.

Stick together while approaching the enemy stronghold. This doesn't mean sticking side by side, however. Separate a bit, especially when enemies attack, so that you confuse the enemy by attacking from multiple directions. When the skirmish is over, you should rejoin and proceed toward the target as a cohesive unit.

Fig. 11-10. A Personnel Carrier is a great way to keep an attack group cohesive and move it to its destination quickly. Make sure you have a good pilot, though; this one crashed and needed repairs.

> *Players in lighter armor need to protect players in Heavy Armor during the passage toward the enemy stronghold. Heavy Armor lacks maneuverability, and if left alone, it'll soon wither under long-range fire from lighter enemies.*

Of course, if you can get your hands on a Heavy Personnel Carrier and fly to the target, you'll be in great shape for the assault.

Dismantling the Base

When you get within Heavy Mortar range of the base, the common technique is to start shelling it with Heavy Mortar or Grenade Launcher fire. Destroy enemy turrets and Pulse Sensors if possible, and break up clumps of defenders that try to shoot at you.

Meanwhile, players in lighter armor need to defend the heavy hitters against the inevitable rush of defenders that swarm out of the base. The idea is to keep heavier armor types alive to deliver a full payload and knock out a good chunk of the base's defenses.

Taking the Next Step

If you manage to clear out the deadliest enemy defenses and most of the defenders, move forward and take control of your target. If you deal some damage but don't completely shatter your target,

you'll need to follow up with another fast attack. Ideally, you want to mount another attack before the defenses you destroyed are repaired.

Of course, to be truly effective on the first try, you should combine your power attack with a speed or stealth raid.

Combined Attacks

Good teams with solid defense can defuse most of the attacks we've discussed in this chapter. They're observant enough to foil pure stealth raids and have enough light defenders in place to intercept speed attackers. They also do a good job of running out to meet power attacks, defusing them before they can bring the whole base to its knees.

However, even a very good defensive team has its lapses. Those lapses come most frequently as a result of multiple attacks that happen at the same time. At some point the defenders have to decide whether to commit everyone to defending against an initial attack or to leave people behind. The first choice risks allowing a sneak attack from another direction, and the second risks losing out to that first attack. It's a tough situation that you need to learn to capitalize on.

Speed and Stealth

In the speed and stealth combined attack, a speed player approaches the enemy target and makes threatening overtures. Perhaps he flies to mid range, blasts off a few shots, and drops back behind a hillside. Perhaps he jets quite close to the base, as if trying to invade it. Regardless, he causes a distraction.

Meanwhile, as the distraction happens, the stealth player sneaks in from the opposite direction that the speed player came from. If he's lucky, the defenders are busy dealing with the speed player, and the speed player is agile enough to occupy them for awhile. This makes it much easier for the stealth player to sneak in undetected and go about his business.

Power and Stealth

The power and stealth combined attack begins when an offensive team approaches the enemy stronghold. This offensive team should ideally be tough enough to pose a serious threat. It should consist of several members and use standard techniques to start wearing down the base.

If the base defenders are any good, they'll react to this threat. Some defenders will run out to meet the invaders head-on; those that don't will undoubtedly watch the fight. This is the time for a stealthy player (or pair of players) to approach the enemy base from the opposite direction and deal some damage.
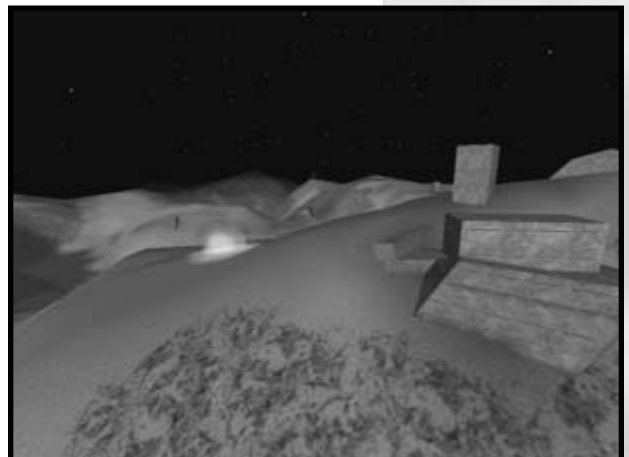
Fig. 11-11. Sneak into the base while the defenders are busy dealing with an obvious threat.

If your teammates are novices, they'll initiate lots of weak, poorly considered attacks on the enemy base all by themselves. This isn't as good as a well considered attack. Nevertheless, these pathetic attempts at heroism can sometimes distract defenders long enough for you to sneak in.

Power and Speed

The power and speed attack is much like a power and stealth attack. The difference is that the player(s) sneaking up from the weak side use pure speed to blaze up to their target instead of stealth.

Avoiding Battle Lock

There's one final consideration when you're on offense, and that's avoiding "battle lock." Observe the following simple rules to keep yourself focused.

Keep your Priorities Straight

Don't fight just for the sake of fighting. Don't waste time shooting at players who aren't in a position to harm your team effort or fighting meaningless battles well away from critical resources. Instead, tear yourself away and try to refocus on a clear goal.

Look for the Alternate Battle

Sometimes two teams will get so absorbed in a battle over a single piece of turf that they'll forget about other important objectives. For example, players may fight over a watchtower yet leave their base undefended. Or on a Capture & Hold mission, players might get so wrapped up in battling for one tower that other, equally valuable towers are forgotten.

If the enemy seems to be locked in on fighting one particular battle, don't be afraid to abandon the fight and look for easier targets elsewhere. Often you'll do more good away from the main fight than you would in it.

Don't Ignore Defenders

When you're attacking a target, don't ignore defenders. That doesn't mean you have to fight. It just means that you can't focus so much on your target that you fail to account for them.
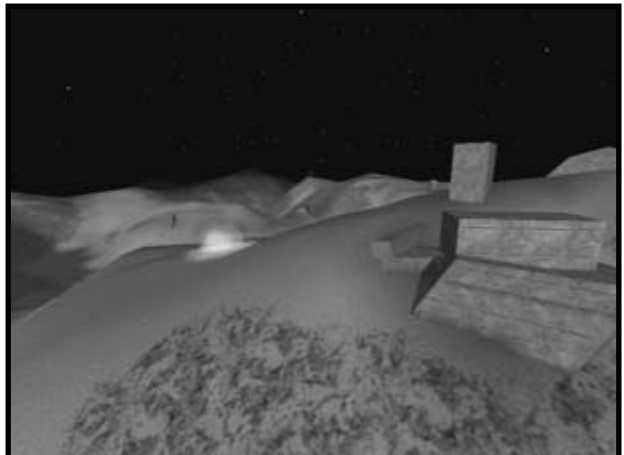
Fig. 11-12. Don't do something shortsighted, like capturing this trigger block while allowing an enemy to blast you. Take out the enemy first; then capture the block.

For example, in Capture & Hold missions, players will often rush in, ignoring defenders, and touch the trigger block, capturing a tower for their team. That's fine, but the defenders can simply shoot in the direction of the trigger block, easily kill the attackers, and then retake the tower.

The moral of the story is to think things through and not get so focused on your goal that you achieve only a temporary one. Always try to consider the defenders in the area. Then ask yourself if you have a legitimate chance of beating them with the tactics you're about to use. If not, you may need to go back to the drawing board and attack in a different way.

12

Command Primer

Command is a tough business. Often, the trick lies not in developing good battle plans, but in conveying your intentions to your teammates and getting them to listen. This chapter takes a look at some of the difficulties associated with command and suggests methods for overcoming them. However, it doesn't delve as far into the X's and O's as you might have expected. That's because you'll often find yourself with limited control over your team's actions. So any plans, save for basic ones, are likely to fall by the wayside.

If you start playing with a close-knit team, you'll eventually develop finer control over your team. By the time you develop this control, however, you're likely to have developed your own theories about the best way to command.

Three Levels of Command

Though the distinction is rather arbitrary, we'll say that there are three levels of command in *Tribes.* By "levels of command" we're not talking about rank but rather about the degree of control you exert over your team. Sometimes you'll select a level of command through conscious effort, but often you'll find that it's dictated by your teammates.

The Leader by Example

The leader by example doesn't spend much time giving explicit orders. Mainly, such a leader spends his or her time playing a normal role and doing it well. Occasionally the leader might suggest tasks for other teammates. If the teammates are inclined to cooperate, they might help the leader accomplish those tasks. Generally speaking though, the leader by example doesn't spend much time barking orders.

If your team has a leader by example, and nothing more, you probably aren't very well organized. There's a lot of free reign with people doing the things they want to do rather than things they were ordered to do. This can work out fine if you have talented players on your team who actively seek out roles and perform them without any prompting.

Fig. 12-1. The leader by example spends much of his time in an ordinary combat role.

Also, teammates who have been playing together for so long that they know their roles by heart can get away with this level of leadership. For teams such as these, formal orders can be a needless burden.

The Field Commander

If your team is a bit more organized, you may be able to assume the role of field commander.

The field commander usually has direct control over most of the team. He plays a role—usually a fairly undemanding role, though, so he has time to give orders. Whenever he isn't pursuing his role, he's examining the map and issuing general orders to his underlings.

Field commanders are valuable in games where there aren't many players. In such games, your team can't afford to have someone just playing commander—you need everyone to contribute to the fight!

The Dedicated Commander

Finally, there is the dedicated commander role. A dedicated commander does nothing but command. Most of his time is spent in a safe location (such as the heart of his team's base) staring at the commander screen.

Occasionally the dedicated commander will spring into action, but only in times of dire need—for example, if the base he's in gets attacked. His energies are instead dedicated to managing the flow of battle.

Dedicated commanders can issue more complicated commands than the other commanders because they have the time to devote to it.

Fig. 12-2. The dedicated commander only plays defense when the base is under a serious threat.

Leading by Example

If you're leading by example, you might have an extremely talented team that's completely self-motivated. More likely though, you're stuck on a team that's not too well organized and doesn't want to be told what to do. If this is the case, the amount of leadership you can provide is limited.

Take over Necessary Roles

The first thing you should do is take over an important role—usually, defense or offense. The role you choose should be based not on what you'd prefer to do, but on what needs to be done to win—and what's feasible. For example, you might love to go on offense, particularly because your team members on offense are doing a lousy job. However, if defense is nonexistent, you should really play defense instead.

Ask for Help

If you've chosen a role that requires several people, ask your team if anyone is prepared to help. If you're defending a base, for example, you could announce which base entrance you're guarding and suggest that someone needs to guard a different entrance. If your teammates are paying attention, you might just get the help you need.

Suggest Options

Once you've taken a role and recruited teammates to help you, you can turn your attention to other teammates working on different tasks. For example, if you're on defense, you might look at the map and notice that your teammates on offense are making a classic mistake.

They're attacking the enemy base individually instead of in waves. Suggest that they team up before attacking.

Of course, you can't be sure that they'll listen to you. Even if they do, if they aren't committed to disciplined play, they won't follow particularly complex commands. You'll have to give simple suggestions like "Everyone attack as a group!" or "Everyone get back on defense!" instead of trying to coordinate complex strikes.

Fig. 12-3. As a commander by example, you can suggest, but you can't really command.

Field Command

As field commander, you juggle the roles of combatant and commander. You have direct control of all or most of your team, but you aren't ready to sit back in your base and devote yourself entirely to command. Your reasons for that may vary; perhaps your team is short on manpower and needs everyone to fight. Maybe your team doesn't respond well to orders other than simple ones, so you'd be wasting your time as a dedicated commander. Or maybe the idea of just sitting around issuing commands bores you to death.

Regardless, the main difficulty as field commander is balancing your combat duties with your command duties.

Fig. 12-4. Splitting time between turret duty and command makes sense for a field commander.

Perform a Role

First, pick a role. Defense is ideal because on defense, you should have lots of downtime in which to issue commands.

If this mission has Command Stations, you can be an effective field commander by issuing commands half the time, and manning the turrets the other half. You'll be juggling back and forth between turret views and the Commander Screen in order to man the turrets. So it's a natural progression to issue a few orders whenever you're in the Commander Screen.

Offense, being the most demanding role you can choose, is tough to juggle with command. However, it can be rewarding if nobody else on your team is qualified to organize a legitimate assault on enemy territory.

Assign Initial Commands

As you start the mission, you should assign your teammates initial commands. These should be general commands, and they don't need to be updated that much. For example, you might assign three players to defend your base and five players to attack the enemy base. Then you'd let those commands stand for awhile.

Assign Group Leaders

It's useful to specify who's in charge of various tasks. For example, if you assign five teammates to attack an enemy base, specify which one of them is the leader of that strike force. This helps with organization, especially if the leader is an experienced player. Attacking an enemy fortification requires strategy. So if you allow all five attackers to proceed on their own, you're likely to end up with a straggling, disjointed attack.

Periodically Revise Commands

Every so often you should tear yourself away from whatever role you're performing and look at the Commander Screen. Reevaluate what's happening. Do you need more attackers or defenders? Does someone need to go out and establish a better sensor network? Assign new orders in accordance with what you see; then go back to your other role.

Dedicated Command

The dedicated commander does nothing but command. This means that there's one less player on the battlefield. Nevertheless, the benefit of having one person coordinating the entire team's effort should outweigh this drawback. If it doesn't, you either aren't a very good commander, or your team isn't listening to you. In either case, step aside and either become a field commander or let someone else take the reins.

Establish Yourself

The first role of the dedicated commander is to establish himself in a safe spot, usually the team's base. In times of extreme crisis, the commander can break away from command to defend the base. During slow times, he can add to the base's infrastructure by dropping Remote Turrets, Cameras, and other fortifications. By and large though, he should be glued to the Commander Screen.

Assign Sub-Commanders

If your team is large, you should have two or three sub-commanders. Have these sub-commanders assign you as a commander. Then have the rest of the team assign the sub-commanders as *their* commanders. Players should then stick close to their sub-commanders at all times, unless otherwise ordered.

The value of having sub-commanders is evident when you want to issue orders quickly. Instead of handpicking several teammates for a task, you can select a sub-commander's group and assign it to a task. This is much quicker than individually selecting four or five players and giving them all the same order.

Another benefit of sub-commanders is that they reduce the need to micro-manage. For example, if you assign a group with a sub-commander to attack a base, the sub-commander can take over from there. He or she can lead teammates to an appropriate spot to stage an attack and initiate the attack in an intelligent way. Without the sub-commander, you may have to micro-manage the attack yourself, first ordering the group to gather someplace, then to advance.

The last benefit of having sub-commanders is that it gets your team used to traveling in groups. If players know they're supposed to stick close to their sub-commander, they'll organize into groups more readily than if left to their own devices. The sub-commander serves as a focal point. Players always know who to join. So if they get killed, they can jump back into the flow of the game instantly just by gathering around the sub-commander.

Continually Watch the Battlefield

Continually watch the battlefield and revise your orders accordingly. As a dedicated commander you can issue more complex orders than a field commander because you've got the time to do so.

For example, don't just tell five men to attack a base. Tell them to assemble near a base, wait for a sniper to reach a nearby hill, and *then* attack.

As you gain command experience, you'll find that having a dedicated commander can do a lot for your team.
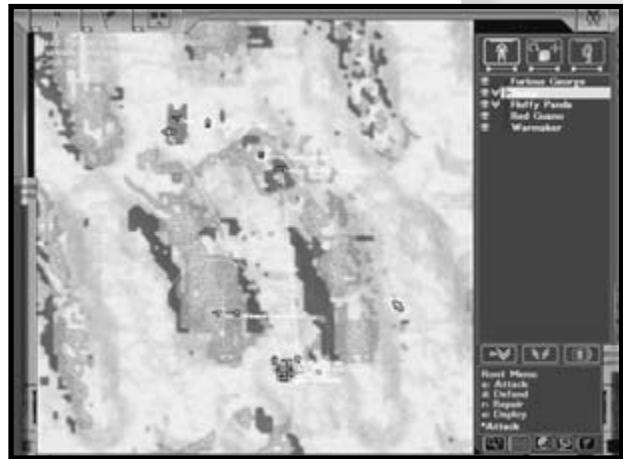
Fig. 12-5. As a dedicated commander you'll spend most of the game looking at this screen.

Coordinating Attacks

Perhaps the toughest thing to do as a commander is to coordinate attacks on enemy strongholds. Here are a few tips on how to do that successfully.

Assign Groups

If you haven't assigned sub-commanders, do so now. It saves you a lot of grief.

If sub-commanders aren't feasible, you'll have to mentally assign various players to groups and issue them commands simultaneously to get them into position.

Make them Wait

The biggest challenge facing a commander of an undisciplined team is making people wait. Players naturally want to sprint out and attack as soon as possible—which is a bad idea. This results in scattered, ineffective attacks with players approaching the enemy base in a trickle instead of a wave.

Make sure your attack group has properly assembled before letting it proceed on its way. If you can't ensure a cohesive group, then your attacks won't get very far.

Get Stealth Attackers into Place First

Coordinating combination attacks, especially ones that use both power and stealth, can be very rewarding. Whenever you're doing this, the key is to let stealthy players get into position before starting the main attack. If you jump the gun and let the main force of your attack push ahead too early, the stealthy player won't be ready. Successful stealth raids require both good positioning and absolute concentration.

Overview of Assignments

After commanding for a while, you'll develop your own theories on how to allocate your forces. To supplement these theories, here are a few suggestions on how to divide your forces in each of the major team game types.

Capture the Flag

A prerequisite for Capture the Flag is solid defense. However, you may have a few truly skilled individuals handling defense. This allows you to place around 70 percent of your forces on offense while leaving only a few defenders at the base.
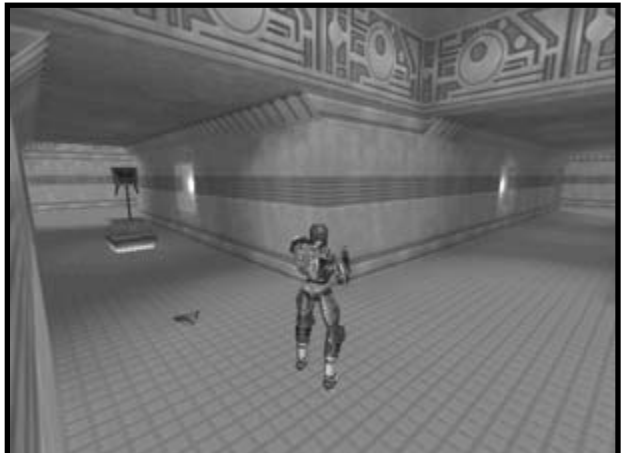
Fig. 12-6. Capture the Flag games require a solid foundation of defense.

Bear in mind that whenever individuals are killed, they tend to reappear near your base. This provides a constant flow of extra teammates in the vicinity of the base in addition to dedicated defenders.

Also, if you're acting as dedicated commander, you can break away from your role to help deal with serious threats to your base.

Ultimately, the mix of offensive to defensive players is entirely up to you. Having too few defenders carries obvious risks. However, having too few attackers is also dangerous because it takes pressure off the enemy and allows it to concentrate purely on offense.

Capture & Hold

On Capture & Hold missions, you want your team to split into several sub-groups. The size of these sub-groups should vary depending on the number of players on your team and the number of towers to be held.

If, for example, you have seven players under your command, and you need to capture three towers, form three attack groups. Make one group of three members and two groups of two members and send them all off to hold different towers.

Remember, holding only two of the three towers for the majority of the game will secure a victory. Therefore, you can create only two groups and assign them to two of the three towers. This way, your forces won't be spread so thin, and you'll be able to effectively defend those two towers.

Fig. 12-7. Capture & Hold missions require you to split your forces into multiple teams.

On maps with more towers, it's often useful to have at least one roving player in Light Armor with a Jammer Pack or Energy Pack. This player would be charged with locating undefended towers and quickly grabbing them. Without such a player, you run the risk of focusing too much on one or two towers. Then the enemy can hold several uncontested towers in other parts of the map.

Defend & Destroy

Defend & Destroy missions are much like Capture the Flag in that you must divide forces between base defense and offense. However, it's easier to destroy something than to carry a flag all the way back to a base. So you might want to concentrate even more on defense.

Find & Retrieve

Find & Retrieve missions can be divided into two stages: the acquisition phase and the battle phase.

In the acquisition stage, you should send the majority of your team out, preferably in Light Armor, to collect items and return to base. Only a few defenders should remain behind to ensure that the base isn't attacked.

Then, when a sufficient number of items has been collected, it's a matter of defending them while simultaneously trying to take the enemy's items.

Generally speaking, the ratio of attackers to defenders should fluctuate depending on how many items your team controls. If your team has more items than the enemy does, you should concentrate almost entirely on defense. Only feint at the enemy base to keep them from over-committing their forces to offense. If your team has fewer items than the other team, you should concentrate most of your forces on offense.
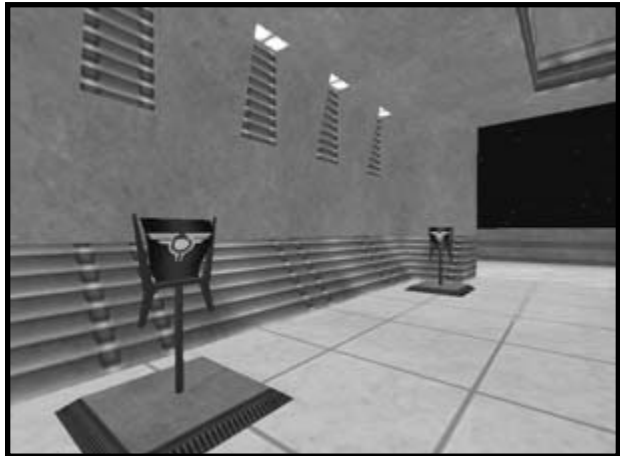
Fig. 12-8. The first stage of Find & Retrieve missions is to collect objects from the map.

13
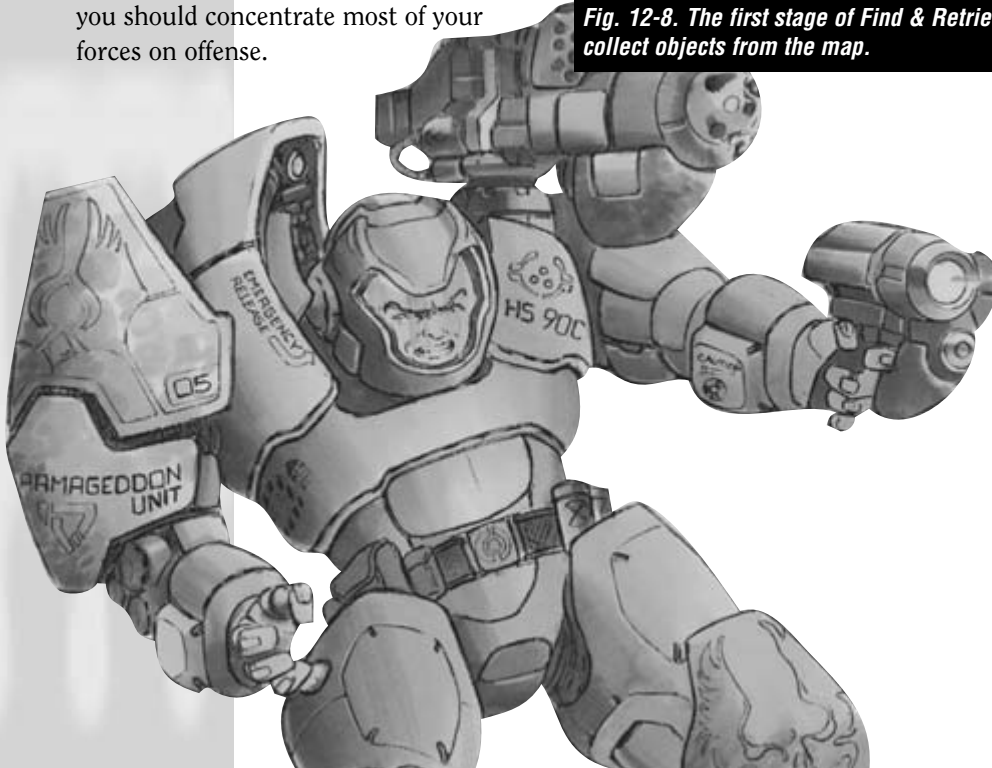
Advanced Battle Guide

The majority of this chapter discusses specific strategies for specific maps. There are far too many strategies and styles of play for us to cover every tactic or prepare you for every contingency. Regardless, you should find these brief notes valuable.

The end of the chapter provides a few general suggestions for maintaining a high level of play.

Maps

The following pages contain notes on every map included with the game. Read on for general tips on how to play each scenario.

A Dish Served Best Cold

Mission Type: Defend & Destroy
Planet: Tyr's Cradle
Weather: Sunny, Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This Defend & Destroy mission puts each team in control of a scattered base consisting of several distinct structures rather than a single, unified base. Each team has a pair of Generators that it must defend. There's one in
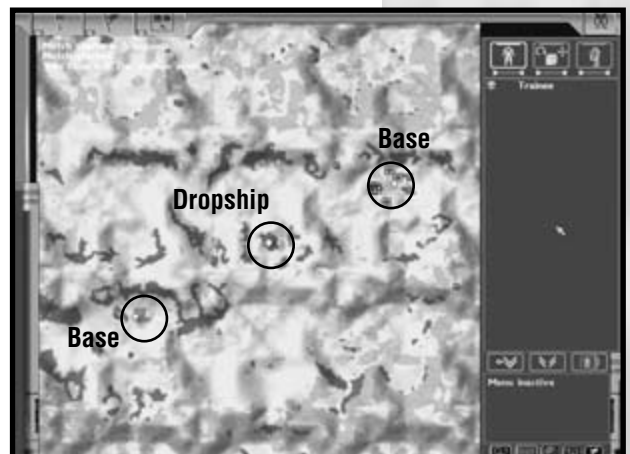
Fig. 13-1. A Dish Served Best Cold

an easy-to-attack tower and one in a small, two-level base that's harder to get at. Destroying an enemy Generator is worth two points.

In addition, an abandoned dropship in the center of the map provides one point if it's captured and held. This dropship can be used as a tiebreaker in close games. However, it becomes less important in games where a team has destroyed one or more of its targets.

> **As with all Defend & Destroy missions, destroyed objectives can be repaired. For example, if the enemy destroys your Generator, you can use a Repair Pack to fix it, and it'll generate power again. However, this doesn't reverse the points the other team got by destroying the Generator; those are permanent.**
>
> **If the enemy destroys the Generator a second time after you've fixed it, no more points are gained.**

Vehicles are available in this mission, and they're quite useful for transportation. Each base has a single Missile Turret, which makes direct attacks with vehicles implausible. But if the Turret is destroyed, such attacks become feasible.

Anthill

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Theta Draconis IV
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

Anthill is both complicated and extremely popular, so it's in your best interest to figure it out quickly. Read the next few paragraphs to learn more.

Most Capture & Hold missions feature multiple towers, but this mission features only a single alien structure. Thus, the entire game is a scramble to control that single structure.

Fig. 13-2. Anthill

Both sides start out in bases located on the eastern and western edges of the map. The disputed structure is located in the middle of the map, *underground*. And there's only one way to reach it. Approach one of four towers near the map's middle, enter that tower, and drop down to the bottom of a shaft. Each shaft leads to the same underground structure containing a massive vertical column with several floors and an elevator in the center. The trigger block that determines control of the structure is at the top of this column. (If you're having trouble visualizing this, host a multi-player game and check it out for yourself.)
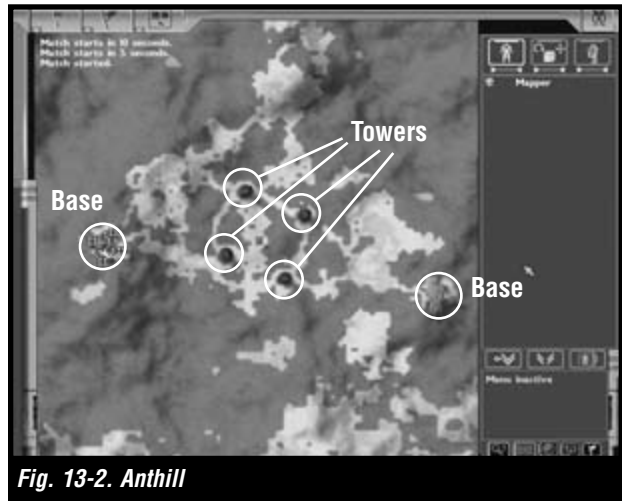
Above ground, two of the four towers have Missile Turrets atop them. Thus, once a team has grabbed control of the structure, it can make life miserable for the other team. The Missile Turrets make it tough to approach the towers, especially if a player is manually controlling them. Meanwhile, the rest of the team can hole up inside the structure and play defense.

A good strategy is to make a mad dash for the structure immediately, with everyone in Light Armor. If this succeeds, have a couple of players in heavier armor come to secure the area. It is preferable for them to go with Remote Inventory Stations so you can drop Remote Turrets and fortify the structure.

If this fails, and the enemy takes control of the structure, you should then try to sneak someone with Light Armor inside. Have him destroy the Generator at the bottom. This takes out power to the Missile Turrets, which can otherwise ruin your attacks.

Failing this, you should have a player in Heavy Armor shell the Missile Turrets into oblivion. Otherwise, they'll make it hard just to get near the bunker, much less attack it.

Then, attack the bunker in waves, and be sure to enter through more than just one tower. If your attacks only come through one tower, the enemy will foil them easily.

A good mix of armor types helps out greatly. Light Armored players can jet around and wreak havoc and even capture the structure for a brief time. But without companions in Medium and Heavy Armor, they won't have any staying power.

Mines are very effective. You can mine the trigger block, along with the four entrances to the structure. Even if enemies attack these mines and detonate them harmlessly, you'll hear the noise and have extra time to respond to the threat.

Blood Runs Cold

Mission Type: Deathmatch
Planet: Tyr's Cradle
Weather: Cold, Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: —

This deathmatch level features a small outdoor area with a large structure in the middle. Outside, towers indicate the borders of the mission area; pass beyond them at your own risk. Clusters of weapons and ammo lie in depressions in the ground near these towers, not on the towers themselves (as is often the case with such maps).

Fig. 13-3. Blood Runs Cold

The central structure runs deep underground and takes some time to get used to. It, too, is packed with weapons, and you'll find healing items and packs in here as well.

Don't enter the brutal central structure until you've collected at least one good weapon. Explosive weapons are best, especially in the close confines indoors. As always with deathmatch missions, look for chances to attack enemies who are otherwise engaged. Also, try not to get caught in the middle of a firefight. Fixating on one enemy is usually a recipe for disaster.
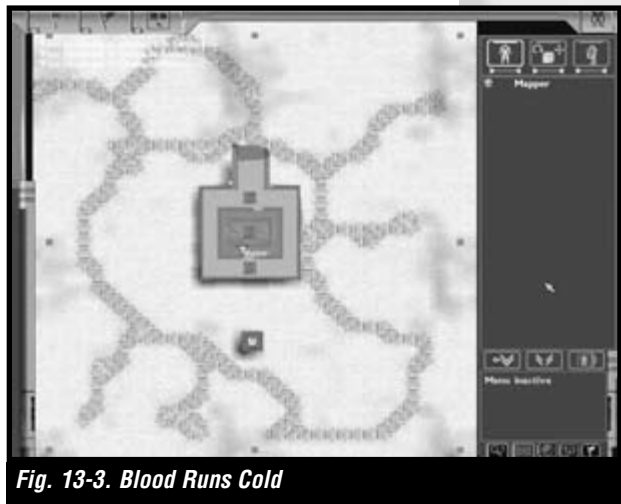
Bloody Vengeance

Mission Type: Defend & Destroy
Planet: Tombaugh V
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

This Defend & Destroy mission places each team in a base fortified by massive walls. Each base has multiple targets. There are two Solar Panels worth one point each, two Plasma Turrets worth two points each, and two Generators worth three points each.

Fig. 13-4. Bloody Vengeance

The Solar Panels are located on top of a pair of towers inside each base's walls and thus are easy to attack. The Plasma Turrets, likewise, are in plain view, mounted on top of walls. The Generators are the hardest to attain. They're located underneath the bases and can only be reached by entering the towers through lofty openings.

Ammo Stations, Inventory Stations, Command Stations, and other key stations are hidden underground with the Generators. A Vehicle Station is located above ground, at the center of each base.

A key to success is maintaining a good ratio of defenders outside your base to defenders lurking underground. If you have too many defenders underground, you'll lose control of the exterior of your base.

Also, realize that you must fly up a vertical shaft to get back to ground level after visiting the underground Inventory Stations. It's a long flight, so don't expect to get into Heavy Armor and still be able to jet back up.

Broadside

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Deus Sanguinis
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This is a Capture the Flag mission that features extremely large, floating bases. They're so large that it makes sense to have multiple defenders guarding both the lower (main) entrance and the upper (rooftop) entrances to your base. Also, there's value in scattering Remote Turrets all throughout the base and selectively mining the flag area.

Fig. 13-5. Broadside

However, don't fall into the trap of putting too many defenders inside. Defenders guarding each exit should split time between inside and outside. If too much time is spent inside, you'll lose sight of what's happening outside and allow enemies to swarm your base.

The first step is usually to destroy the turrets, Pulse Sensor, and Solar Panel on top of the enemy base. Also, you can often use the help of your own base's Mortar Turret. Then, when these items are worn down, attackers can try to infiltrate. Multiple attackers in Light or Medium Armor are best. In Heavy Armor, you'd need to make extensive use of the step-like floating platforms leading up to the enemy base. That would leave you vulnerable.

You should also make sure that there are a few team members standing on the exterior of your base at all times. Have them shoot and harass enemies on the other base, fix your turrets, and prevent the enemy from repairing its own base features.

If both teams are highly defensive minded, this mission could easily result in a draw. Don't get impatient and let your defense break down, though. There's nothing worse than holding out for most of the mission, only to let it all slip away when everyone leaves for a massive attack.

Citadels

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Sarkanus VII
Weather: Hazy
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This Capture & Hold mission features three massive floating citadels that are up for grabs at the mission's start. These citadels are fully functional bases, complete with turrets, a Generator, Inventory Stations, Ammo Stations, and a Command Station.

Fig. 13-6. Citadel

Each side starts in a small base in the corner of the map. These bases have automatic doors that are triggered only by friendly team members, so attacking the enemy's base is rarely an easy task.

Each base has a Vehicle Station, and vehicles are quite important on this map. Aside from the fact that the map is large, the bases float high enough that players in Heavy Armor may have trouble jumping in. This is especially true when assaulting the central base, which is extremely high in the air. The central tower is even a tough jump for a player in Light Armor.

Each citadel has a Missile Turret, which makes it hard to fly a vehicle in the vicinity. If the enemy takes a citadel, you'll usually have to take out its Missile Turret if you hope to launch a good assault on it. Otherwise, the Missile Turret will shoot you down.

Since there are only three citadels, and they're all quite heavily fortified, you'd do well to defend them aggressively once you've taken them. Don't bother trying commando raids on enemy citadels—their Missile Turrets and sheer height make it difficult to take them over. You must first wear down the defenses, then bring a large contingent of teammates to secure them.
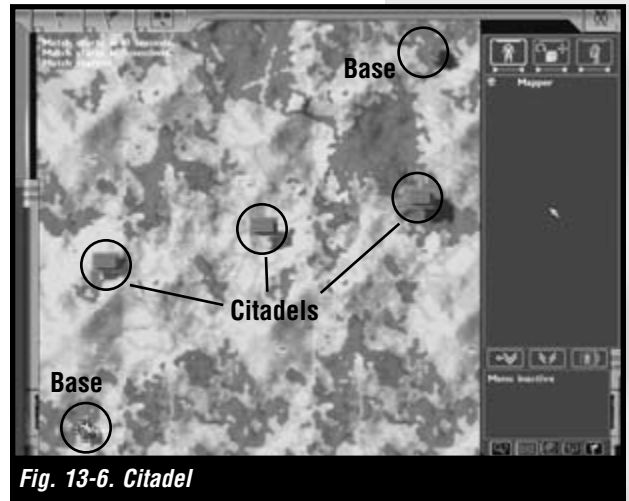
Criss Cross

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Ultima Thule
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

This mission features five towers that are up for grabs, arranged in a rough square with four towers at the corners, and one at dead center.

Each team starts at a base that's little more than a Missile Turret and some Inventory Stations.

The towers themselves are not all identical, and knowing their quirks is

Fig. 13-7. Criss Cross

essential. The northwest and southeast towers have exterior turrets and Inventory Stations and thus are quite valuable. The northeast and southwest towers have Pulse Sensors, Mini-Fusion Turrets and little else. So they don't provide much for their defenders. These towers tend to change hands a lot.

The central tower is the largest, and it is the prize tower. It doesn't have an Inventory Station, but it has a Mortar Turret and big Pulse Sensor radius, plus a Command Station. Plus, it's big and features only one path leading to its trigger block, so it's easy to defend.

Generally speaking, your team should do one of two things: Commit to taking the two towers closest to your base, plus the central tower. Or ignore the central tower (save for destroying its Mortar Turret) and take three of the outer towers.
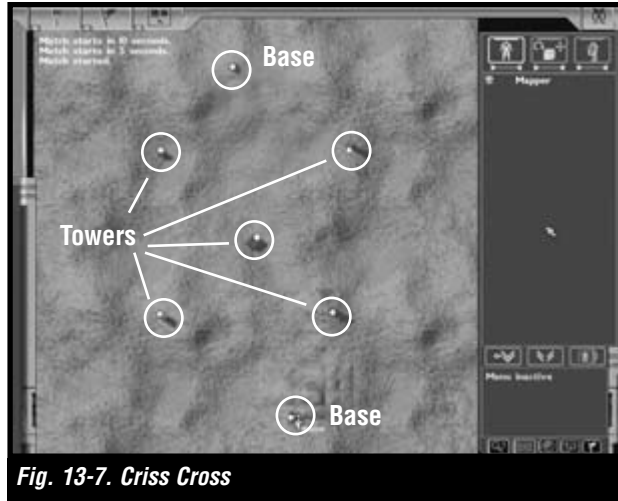
Dangerous Crossing

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Tombaugh V
Weather: Hazy
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This is a very simple mission, with two bases separated by a huge chasm. Each base is small and lightly fortified and has a separate, outdoor Inventory Station that helps ease the usual Inventory Station bottlenecks.
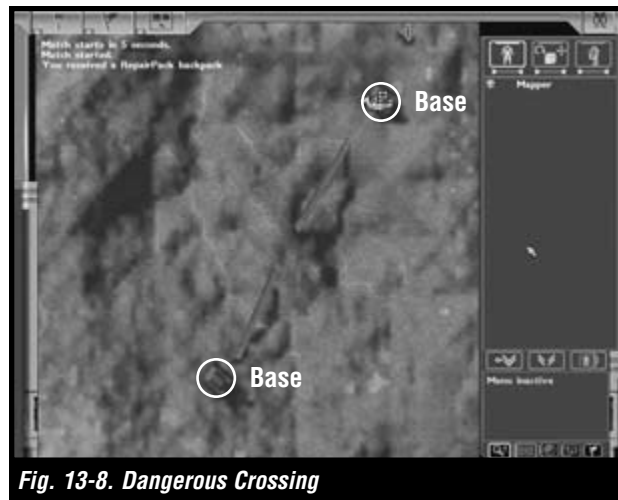
Fig. 13-8. Dangerous Crossing

The size of the map makes stealth and speed attractive, so a smart team will do its best to defend against such attacks.

The bridge leading across the chasm is a nice touch, but it isn't a good idea to use it. Running along the bridge just makes you an attractive target.

Death Knell

Mission Type: Find & Retrieve
Planet: Theta Draconis IV
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: 2

Fig. 13-9. Death Knell

This is a classic 20-minute Find & Retrieve mission. Each team has a base with four pedestals. Near the middle of the map is an undefended neutral installation that contains four flags.

Your task is to retrieve the four flags and hold them at your base. Very seldom are all four flags actually captured by one team. Usually, the mission is decided by which team has the most flags when time runs out.

Additionally, capturing the flag installation and holding it garners your team a point. This is tricky, however, as the installation has no built-in defenses.

The flags are located at the very bottom of the installation. Several players in Light Armor should raid the installation at the mission's start. Eventually, it'll be a fight where the side with more flags tries to defend them, and the side with fewer flags tries to steal more.

Beware, however, of leaving your base unprotected, even if your team has fewer flags. If a stealthy attacker steals your last flag, you'll automatically lose.

Finally, note that it's easy to wander out of the mission area on this map because the bases are so close to the edges. Refer to the map periodically if you want to stay inbounds.
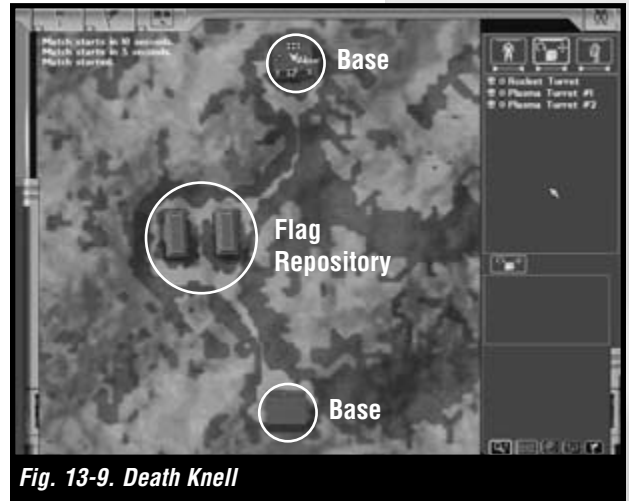
Desert of Death

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Omicron Argentis VI
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: 2

This unique Capture the Flag mission contains no Inventory Stations, so you're stuck in the armor you started with. In addition, you'll either have to use your default weapons and items, or collect them from the map.

There are a few valuable weapons and items scattered across the map; they're all located on stone ruins. Repair Packs

Fig. 13-10. Desert of Death

and Energy Packs are relatively common. The most significant trove may very well lie in the center of the map. Here you'll find a Plasma Gun and Ammo, plus a Laser Rifle.

To succeed in this mission, a truly disciplined team will gather into an army and swarm the enemy base. Individual heroics usually don't work. This is because Fusion Turrets and ELF Turrets guard the pyramids holding the flags, and the flags are stuck in holes in the ground. Mines (which can be found near each base) are carefully placed at the pyramid entrances and by the flags. So, it's extremely difficult for a lone attacker to swoop in and take the prize.

The Plasma Gun lets you take out enemy Pulse Sensors—quickly if you have a teammate help out (perhaps with the Chaingun or Disk Launcher). This goes a long way toward making commando raids easier. However, a truly alert team won't give you enough time to take out its Pulse Sensors. So, massive raids are often the best way to go.

Fallen

Mission Type: Find & Retrieve
Planet: Halcyon II
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

This relatively straightforward Find & Retrieve mission places each team in charge of a base at the periphery of the map. Three flags are located in the main chamber of a wrecked ship near the map's center. The teams are charged with retrieving these three flags and taking them back to their respective bases.

Fig. 13-11. Fallen

The only real twist is the ship containing the flags. It's fallen on its side. So anyone trying to get inside must jet up and enter through hard-to-find side openings. In addition, traversing the interior of the ship is disorienting because of the skewed perspective.

There is one large entrance and one small entrance to the ship. The large entrance is easier to enter through but requires you to take a roundabout path to the flags. The smaller entrance is sort of a back door and is more direct.

The flags themselves reside near the top of the ship.

As usual with these missions, make sure your team initially sprints out to take at least one flag and retrieve it. Then try to take flags from the enemy base while defending your own.

Fog-of-War

Mission Type: Find & Retrieve
Planet: Garden of Vishnu
Weather: Foggy
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

Like Death Knell, Fog-of-War is a grab-the-flags mission with a twist. The main objective is to bring all four flags from their floating pedestals at the center of the map to your team's medium-sized base. There are also two valuable towers near these flags, which contain Mortar Turrets, Missile Turrets, and even Inventory Stations.

Fig. 13-12. Fog-of-War

The real trick here lies in striking a balance between controlling these towers, grabbing flags, and defending your base. If your team can grab all four flags and convey them all back to your base, you can concentrate entirely on defending. But that's hard to do. More likely you'll need to maintain a strong presence in at least one of the two central towers. Meanwhile, leave a few team-mates behind to guard the flags.
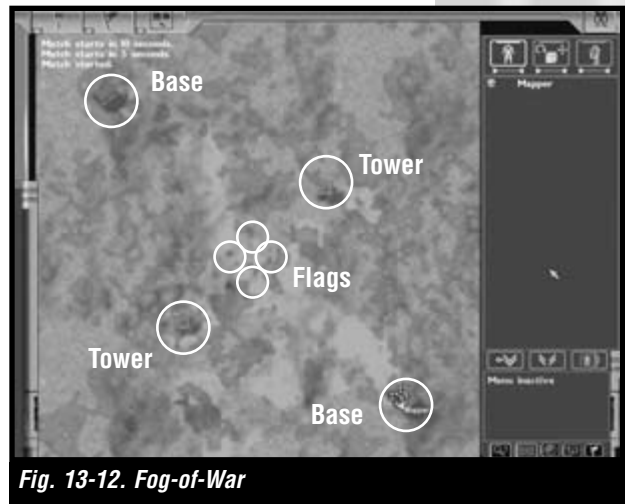
Four Way Dance

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Septa Scarabae IV
Weather: Rain, Low Visibility
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 4

This unusual, four-way Capture the Flag mission is intriguing, to say the least. Four teams start the game with small bases arrayed around a central tower.
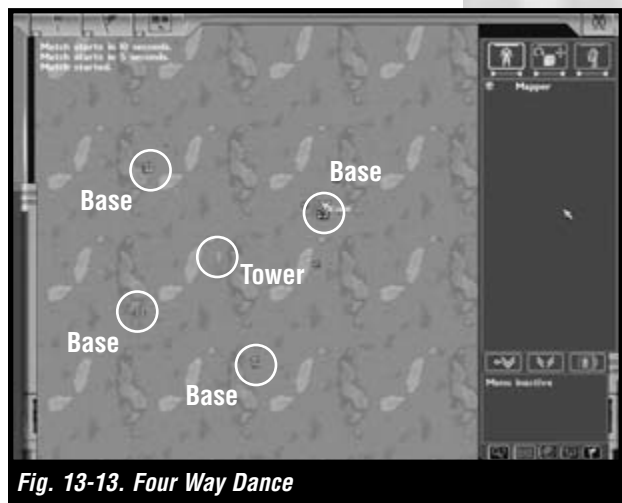
Fig. 13-13. Four Way Dance

The tower doesn't have any massive turrets or far-reaching Pulse Sensors. It does, however, have a Vehicle Station, and one point is granted for possessing it.

The key to beating this mission is a blend of strong defense and opportunistic offense. Everyone's base has a number of turrets. But the bases themselves are very small and thus prone to damage from shelling and vulnerable to hit-and-run raids. You'll need a few skilled players on defense to hold down the fort.

On the other hand, there's more incentive to go on the offensive than in most Capture the Flag missions. Perfect defense in most Capture the Flag games ensures at least a tie. However, it's entirely possible to never lose your flag in Four Way Dance yet still lose the mission. That's because your enemies can steal other teams' flags.

Be opportunistic. Steal flags from weakened bases. If a team decides to go on the defensive, leave it alone and go after bases that have fewer defenders. Selecting the right targets is extremely important.

Free for All

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Theta Draconis IV
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 4

This mission is fundamentally identical to Anthill, save that four teams compete for the central structure instead of two. Also, each of the four towers at the center of the map has a Missile Tower, as opposed to the Anthill mission, where only two of them do.

Attacking enemy bases is pointless in this mission. There are just too many factions, and disrupting one of them won't affect the others.

In Anthill, you'll often see a team hold the central structure for a long time. However, this is rare in Free for All

Fig. 13-14. Free for All

due to the sheer number of attackers assaulting it at all times.

Attack in big, strong groups so you can fight your way to the trigger block and hold it for a while when you get there. Also, have one team member in Light Armor whose only job is to fly up and touch the trigger block as frequently as possible. This technique usually won't gain you the structure for more than a few moments at a time. But those moments add up, especially in a four-player environment where games tend to be close.

Hammer Down

Mission Type: Defend & Destroy
Planet: Tombaugh V
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This mission requires your team to defend three mini-bases, each with a mission-critical Generator. The central base also has a Command Station that must be defended.

Since your bases are scattered, defending all three will be extremely difficult, especially if your team isn't very large. You may want to concede one of your three bases, allowing the enemy to destroy it, and focus on defending the other two extremely well. Then, if you manage to destroy two of the enemy's Generators, your team will win.

Another strategy is to guard only one base—the central one. Then launch a full-scale attack with the other team members that would otherwise be on defense. If you manage to take down the enemy's central base, this approach will definitely pay off.
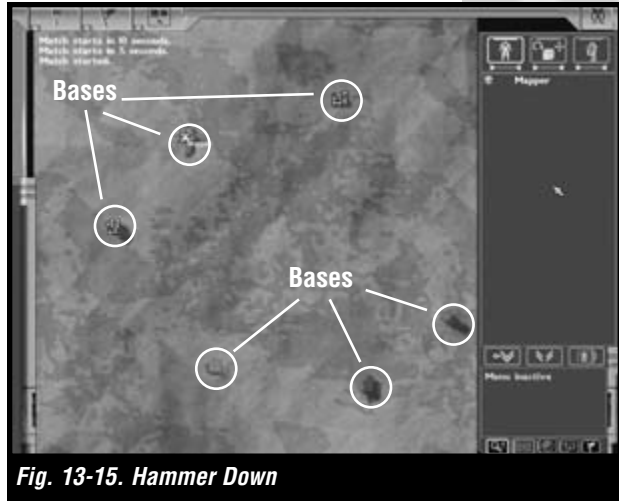
Fig. 13-15. Hammer Down

Ice Ridge

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Zeta Hercules XI
Weather: Foggy
Time of Day: Morning
Number of Teams: 2

This is a mission that requires solid perimeter defense. Flags are right out in the open on each base's rooftop. So a failure to establish a strong and vigilant perimeter defense means enemies can easily swoop down, snatch your flag, then make off with it.

A valley runs down the middle of this map connecting the two teams' bases. Stealth attackers will want to approach the enemy base from either side of this valley, not down the middle.

Fig. 13-16. Ice Ridge

Perhaps the best way to capture a flag in this mission is to destroy the enemy's main Pulse Sensor, then initiate a multiple-wave attack. Have several players swoop down slightly, one after another, from different directions. If one attacker can draw the majority of the defenders, another attacker should be in a good position to snatch the flag.

King Under the Hill

Mission Type: Deathmatch
Planet: Fiafagon
Weather: Partly Cloudy
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: None (Free for All)

A massive, multi-level, underground structure runs through the middle of this deathmatch-style map. It contains weapons, ammo, and healing items. You can also locate good weapons outside, on small structures scattered around the periphery of the map.

Fig. 13-17. King Under the Hill

A Repair Pack on a huge pedestal inside the structure is a valuable prize. Try to grab it if you can; it'll greatly increase your chances of staying alive.

As with all deathmatches, learn the terrain and look for targets of opportunity. Since teamwork doesn't apply here, use hard-hitting, splash damage weapons like the Plasma Gun and Disk Launcher. These weapons can finish the job and perhaps injure multiple enemies at once.

Lucky Seven

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Avicord's Planet
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: 3

This three-way fight for seven towers is an exercise in decision making. Since there are three teams involved, you can't count on there only being as many enemies as teammates. Thus, you have to be selective when you pick your fights.

Fig. 13-18. Lucky Seven

The central and central southern towers don't have Inventory Stations, and their trigger blocks are right out in the open. So they're likely to change hands quite a bit. The other towers are somewhat harder to assault.

Instead of agreeing upon towers to defend and sticking with them, watch the flow of the mission and go after towers that are weak. Sticking with a plan all through the game can be disastrous. For example, let's say you decide to attack the southeastern tower and hold it, along with a couple others. If another team has been beaten up so badly that they only hold that one tower,
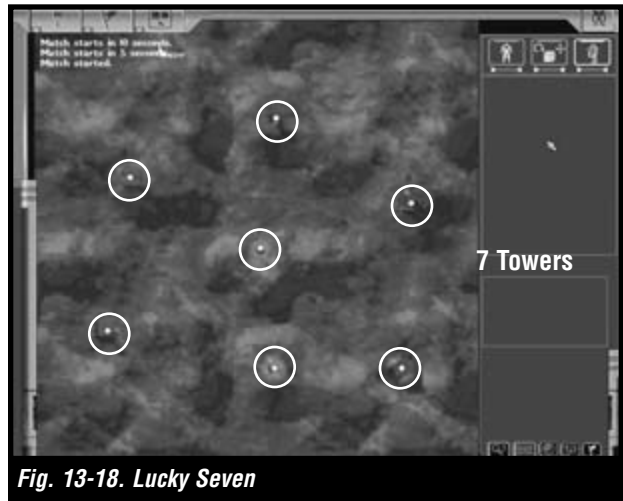
you'll have an extremely tough time taking it. That's because the battered team will pour all of its manpower into holding it. In addition, anyone you kill will reappear nearby because that's the only tower the team holds.

Look for opportunities and soft spots, therefore, and take the towers that you suspect will fall easily.

Mudslide

Mission Type: Find & Retrieve
Planet: Hecta Paramis
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This is an interesting mission because instead of returning flags to your base for the victory, you must take them to a central flag repository. Just like a tower, the repository has a trigger block that can be captured to switch possession.

A valid strategy is to try to have most of your team capture the flag repository

Fig. 13-19. Mudslide

while one team member grabs a flag. Then you can have the majority of your team hold the repository while the flag carrier comes and places it there. Hold the repository for the rest of the mission to win.

The flag repository has light defenses but no Inventory Stations. So, bringing Remote Inventory Stations is usually a vital key to holding the repository against your foes.

No Man's Land

Mission Type: Find & Retrieve
Planet: Parson's Planet
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

Four of the five target flags are located in a central repository, which can be captured and held for a point. The fifth flag is located in a crashed ship that you can only enter by jetting in through a hole. This ship has crashed at a crazy angle, so you'll have a tough time making your way through it.
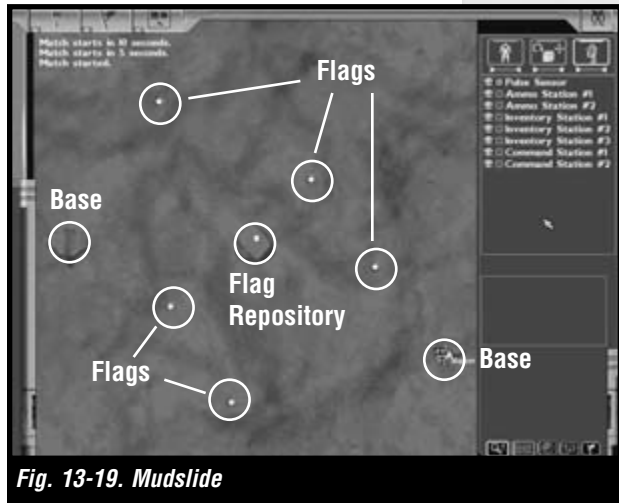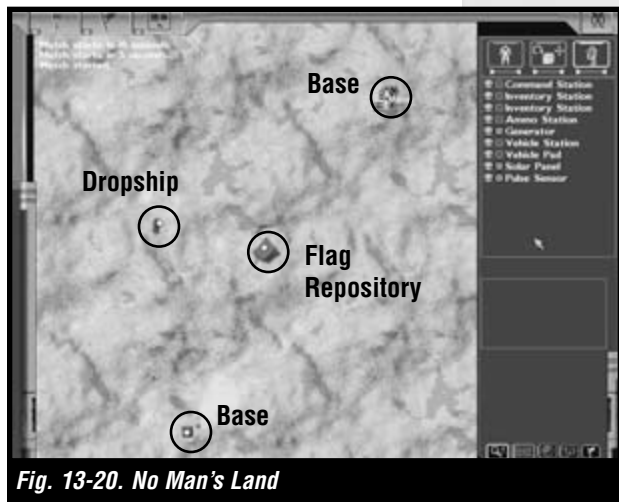
Fig. 13-20. No Man's Land

An effective strategy for this mission is to snatch as many flags as possible, as quickly as possible. Then take them all back to your base. If you manage to get four of the five flags, you can just hole up and ignore the repository. Even if the other team gets the last flag and holds the repository, they'll only get two points.

However, if you only get three flags, you'll need to defend both your base and the repository. The repository's single point, in this case, will be enough to put your team over the top.

Finally, if you get only one or two flags at the start, you'll need to attack the enemy base to retrieve at least one of them.

No Quarter

Mission Type: Defend & Destroy
Planet: Priam III
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This Defend & Destroy mission puts each team in charge of a large base with two main entrances—top and bottom. The team's two mission-critical Generators are both located inside this base, in the same room. So you can really stack up your defense around defending this room.

Fig. 13-21. No Quarter

A pair of towers in between the two bases are each worth a point if they're captured and held. Even more importantly, though, they have both Inventory Stations and Mortar Turrets, so they can be used to harass the enemy. Allowing the enemy to take over both towers is a bad idea because you can expect a continual hail of mortar fire.

A good strategy is to take over the nearer of the two towers and try to destroy the Mortar Turrets on the farther tower. This opens the way for subsequent attacks on the real prize, the enemy base.

Peak Performance

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Hepta Ourubis II
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

This mission features five towers to Capture & Hold. The two northern towers possess Inventory Stations while the central and southern towers don't. It's undesirable, therefore, to get stuck with only the southern towers.
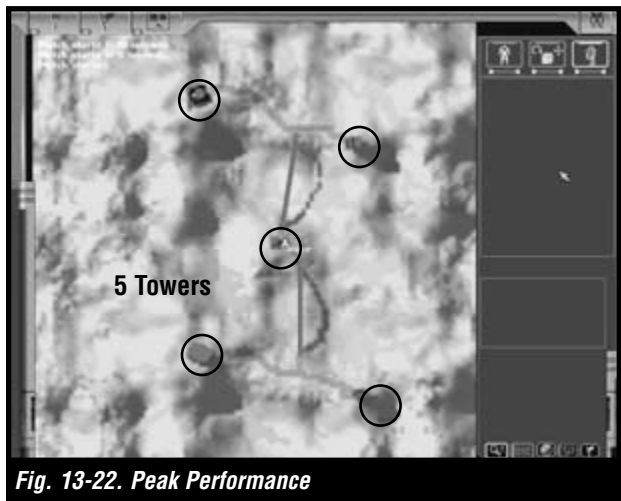
Fig. 13-22. Peak Performance

None of the towers have any built-in defenses, though all have Pulse Sensors. Also, the northern two bases are more heavily walled than the other two.

Try to secure the northern towers at all costs. The Inventory Stations located inside will allow your team to access the weapons and Remote Turrets needed to fortify their position. Then venture south to capture a third tower for the win.

Peekaboo

Mission Type: Deathmatch
Planet: Avicord's Planet
Weather: Clear but Hazy
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: None (Free for All)

This deathmatch takes place outdoors. The center of the map contains a valuable Repair Pack while weapons are located on small structures scattered around the map's periphery. Since weapons and gear are in short supply, possessing the Repair Pack and a potent weapon will often keep you alive for quite a while.

Fig. 13-23. Peekaboo

Learn to keep moving and not fixate on a single target. The wide-open spaces of this map allow multiple enemies to see you at once, and everyone starts out with a fast-firing Blaster. Add up these two facts, and you'll realize that standing still is a sure recipe for disaster.

Raindance

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Tawa Mangahela
Weather: Raining
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This Capture the Flag mission features a large gulch spanned by a bridge at the center of the map.

The flags in this mission are out in the open. But since they're up on towers, they're slightly less prone to snatch-and-grab tactics than in Ice Ridge. There are also small bases with Inventory Stations near the flags, plus turrets and Vehicle Stations.

Fig. 13-24. Raindance

Each base has a Missile Turret. Taking out the enemy's Missile Turret leaves the enemy open to serious abuse from the skies. Destroy it, and you can send a couple of players in Scout Flyers over to make the enemy miserable.
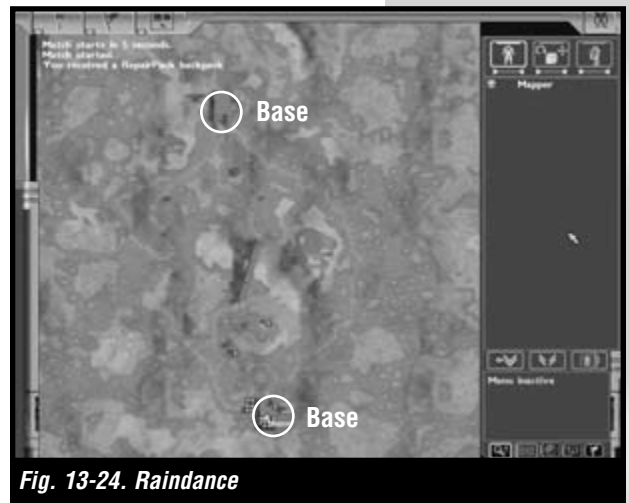
As usual for missions where the flag is more or less out in the open, combined attacks are crucial to victory. Lone players usually can't sneak in and grab the flag by themselves, especially while the Missile Turret and other defenses are up. Once these defenses are removed, however, anything can happen.

Rollercoaster

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Deus Sanguinis
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

Rollercoaster is a unique Capture the Flag mission. It features floating bases that are large but completely open in design. Flags are quite distant from the main base, so your team needs to extend its defenses somewhat to keep attackers at bay.

Fig. 13-25. Rollercoaster

Turrets defend the ledges leading up to these floating bases. So, attackers in Medium or Heavy Armor will be in for a surprise if they try to use them as stepping stones. This makes Light Armor and vehicular attacks much more attractive.

A pair of force fields protects each team's Inventory Stations. However, these force fields can be taken out by destroying two Solar Panels atop the enemy base; there's no other power source.

Be sure to scatter your base defenders and have someone ready to repair those Solar Panels at all times. They're quite fragile, and your base depends on them.

Sand Storm

Mission Type: Deathmatch
Planet: Hepta Ourubis II
Weather: Sandstorm;
Low Visibility
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: None
(Free for All)

This deathmatch takes place on a relatively open plain with ruins scattered all around. Weapons and packs are always located on or near ruins.

Visibility is limited by the sandstorm, but you can still see quite a lot due to the lack of cliffs or other major terrain obstacles.

Fig. 13-26. Sand Storm

As always in deathmatch missions, keep moving and try to pick up at least one potent weapon before fighting.

Scarabrae

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Avicord's Planet
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This popular mission is Capture the Flag with a twist. Two large floating bases house flags as usual, but the center of the map contains a watchtower equipped with potent Missile Turrets. Control of this tower at the mission's end confers one point.

Fig. 13-27. Scarabrae

The watchtower cannot be ignored because its Missile Turrets are dangerous to anyone crossing the center of the map, especially flying craft.

If your defenders are solid enough, you can sometimes defend your base effectively with only a few men. Then you can have the rest hold the watchtower until the end for the victory. Another strategy, which is also valid, is to wreck the watchtower's Generator, Command Stations, and Missile Turrets. That way, the enemy can't get much use out of them. Then largely ignore them while launching flag attacks on the enemy base.

Flying craft figure prominently in this mission since they allow extremely fast base attacks, despite the distance between bases. Again, though, you always have to keep that watchtower in mind.

Seek and Destroy

Mission Type: Defend & Destroy
Planet: Tyr's Cradle
Weather: Snow and Ice
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: 2

This is a fundamentally simple Defend & Destroy mission, complicated slightly by towers in the northeast and southwest. These towers can be held for one point apiece, plus they each have a Vehicle Station. However, they possess no other useful features, and they're too far away from significant targets to be of much tactical value.

Fig. 13-28. Seek and Destroy

Both bases are tough and well defended by both exterior and interior turrets. Taking out the enemy base's Missile Turret is crucial if you want to use aircraft to assault the base.

Since most of your primary targets are inside the enemy base, where the Inventory Stations are also located, those bases are difficult to penetrate. Enemies can easily stack up on defense. Prepare to attack with power and numbers because the Sentinels guarding the bases' interiors make it extremely difficult to sneak in.

Siege

Mission Type: Defend & Destroy
Planet: Ultima Thule
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: 2

This Defend & Destroy mission features tough, massive floating bases. Each base contains a wealth of targets, most of which are clustered inside, in two key places. The enemy Pulse Sensor is the only target that's relatively unprotected.

There's a Mortar bunker in the middle of the map. Controlling this bunker

Fig. 13-29. Siege

lets you shell the enemy base. Each base has Missile Turrets (plus other turrets that make it difficult to jet up and attack). Therefore, it's very handy to control this bunker and use it to shell the exterior of the enemy base.

The bases in this mission are so large, and so complicated, that both power attacks and sneak attacks work well. Mix up your attacks and be sure to assign defenders to key defensive points. You'll probably need to play this map a few times before you get the hang of how the bases are laid out and where you should establish your defenses.
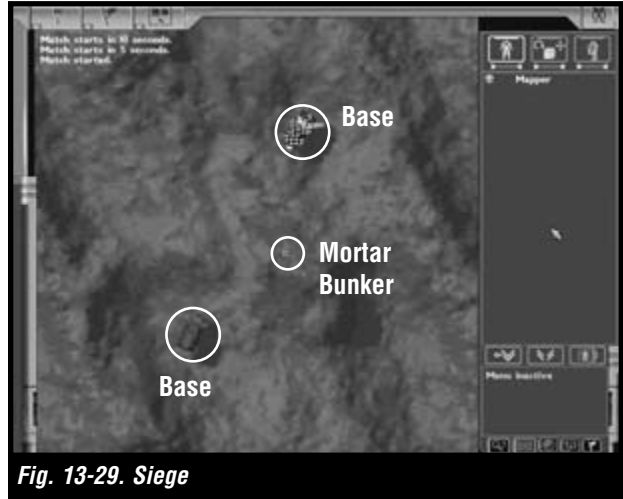
Snow-Blind

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Ymir
Weather: Foggy
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

This interesting Capture the Flag game places each team in control of a base with a flag and a tower near the center of the map. The towers cannot change hands, but they contain Inventory Stations and thus are useful as supply points.
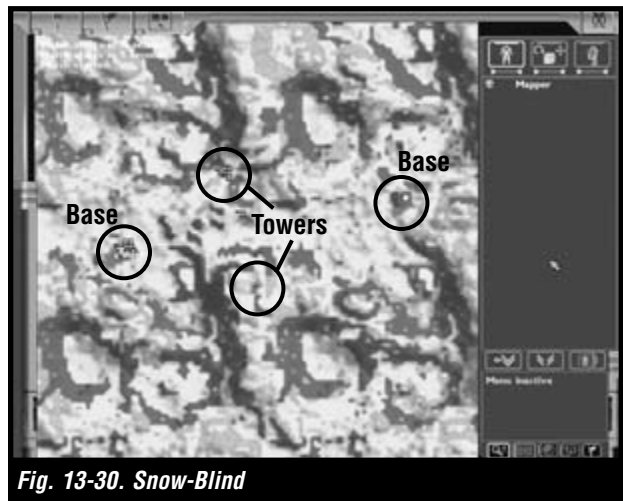
Fig. 13-30. Snow-Blind

The bases are two-level affairs, with Inventory Stations on the bottom floor and the flag on the top floor. The top floor isn't very well guarded, and the bases are small. Therefore, they're highly susceptible to both speedy attacks and grenades or Heavy Mortar shells from outside.

Be sure to establish a good mix of perimeter defense and point-of-attack defense. The bases are so small that if everyone crowds inside, they'll be killed easily by grenades. Array defenders inside, on the rooftop, and on surrounding hills. Be sure that several are in Light Armor so they can easily traverse the steep terrain.

On offense, diversions are usually very effective. Draw the defenders' attention by shelling the lower floor of the enemy base while a faster player jets to the top floor and snatches the flag.

Stonehenge

Mission Type: Capture the Flag
Planet: Septa Scarabae IV
Weather: Foggy and Raining
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: 2

The main challenges of this Capture the Flag mission spring from three things. There's the spread-out nature of its bases, their proximity to the enemy base, and the large structure dominating the center of the map.

Flags are located in towers separate from the main base. This makes them slightly harder than usual to defend. Also, the enemy base is quite close, and the structure in the center of the map makes it easy to sneak up on the enemy base. So, you have a flag that's extremely vulnerable to sneak attacks and speed attacks.

Fig. 13-31. Stonehenge

Be sure to assign at least one point-of-attack defender to stand near the flag, preferably with an ELF Gun. This player can then drain the energy of high-flying attackers.

Strung Out

Mission Type: Find & Retrieve
Planet: Zeta Mergatroid
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Night
Number of Teams: 2

This mission has five flags. Four are placed in a line near the center of the map; the fifth is located at the entrance to a pyramid at the center of the map.
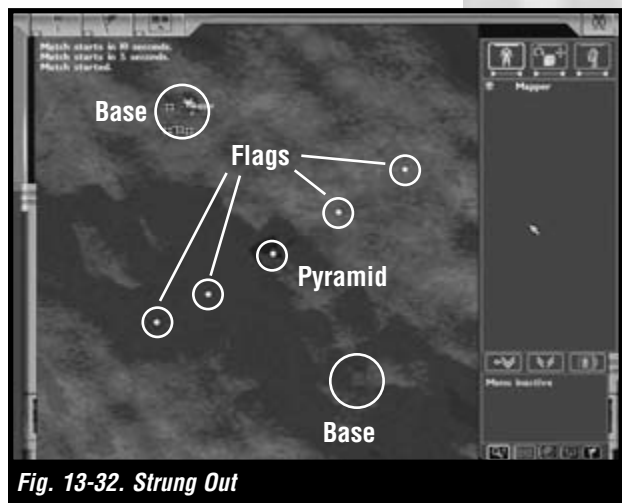
Fig. 13-32. Strung Out

This pyramid can be captured and held for a point; it contains Inventory Stations but doesn't have any defenses.

The bases in this mission are unusual as they're largely underground. Only the roofs peek out above ground level. The flag pedestals float in the air somewhat below ground level, in spots that are somewhat awkward to defend. You'll probably want to have a strong perimeter defense for this mission.

When attacking the enemy base, you'll want to clear out any Remote Turrets nearby. Then send speedy players down to quickly snatch a flag, then jet back out. Lobbing Heavy Mortar shells down into the enemy base is often a great help as well.

Temple of Doom

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Halcyon II
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Dusk
Number of Teams: 2

This is a unique and intriguing Capture & Hold mission. Each team starts with a base consisting of the usual Inventory Stations plus Vehicle Stations and other niceties. However, that's not what's interesting about this mission.

The uniqueness of the mission springs from the fact that your seven targets are not towers, but rather, floors of the same structure. This leads to nasty, claustrophobic infighting that's guaranteed to bring a smile to your face.

Taking over different floors allows your team to take control of Inventory Stations, turrets, and other features

Fig. 13-33. Temple of Doom

associated with each floor. You have to be careful not to take anything for granted. Just because your team controls a few floors, you can't assume that every turret you pass by is yours.

Try to attack in groups, and make heavy use of mines. Controlling the first floor entrance is valuable, as is controlling the entrances to the structure's upper levels. The basement and the very top levels can only be reached through a central elevator shaft that goes through the entire structure. Control of this shaft is key.

Heavy Armor is definitely useful in this scenario since you'll absorb a lot of punishment in the close confines of the structure.
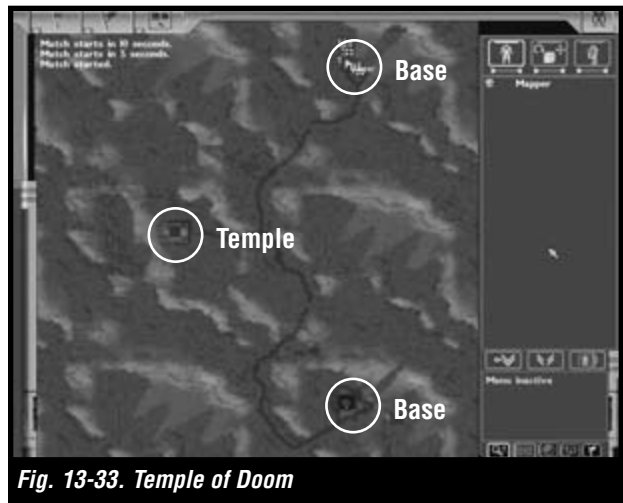
The Red Sands

Mission Type: Deathmatch
Planet: Ultima Thule
Weather: Light Fog; Limited Visibility
Time of Day: Midday
Number of Teams: None (Free for All)

This typical outdoor deathmatch features a big, flat map where visibility is limited only by the fog. Scattered ruins dot the map, and as you might expect, that's where you'll find the weapons. Keep moving, and keep looking for more firepower.

Fig. 13-34. The Red Sands

Towers

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Avicord's Planet
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

This mission is a frantic grab for five towers. As always with this sort of mission, it can be a good policy to hold three towers with all of your man-power. You shouldn't spread people out thinly and attack all five towers. Of course, you'll still want to have occasional raiders in Light Armor sneak out and test the enemy's towers, just to keep them honest.

A lone player, especially a skilled one, can hold a tower for quite a while against a disor-ganized attack. The enemy may play commando-style, attacking your towers in a trickle rather than large, concentrated waves. In this case, you'll do well to leave one man in each tower and try to capture all five towers at once. But if the enemy is organized, holding three towers and really digging in is usually the way to go.

5 Towers

Fig. 13-35. Towers

The western two towers, as well as the easternmost, have Inventory Stations. The other two do not. If you're holding only three towers, therefore, you probably want two of them to be towers with Inventory Stations.

Triple Threat

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Avicord's Planet
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 3

This mission is identical to Towers, save that three teams compete for the five towers instead of only two. This changes the rules of engagement somewhat. Holding two towers for the majority of the game, plus occasionally capturing a third, usually gains you a victory. Be opportunistic, and let your game plan change as new opportunities appear.
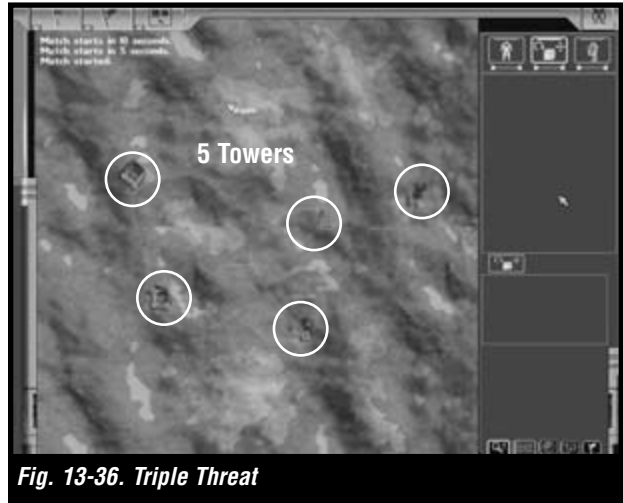
Fig. 13-36. Triple Threat

Valhalla

Mission Type: Capture & Hold
Planet: Ymir
Weather: Clear
Time of Day: Day
Number of Teams: 2

This mission features two teams battling for three towers. Holding two of the three towers for the majority of the game will net your team a win. Therefore, it's often a good idea to select two towers (usually the middle one, plus a side tower) and try to hold them. Then make only occasional feints at the third tower to keep the enemy from overcommitting to the attack.

    The hilly terrain makes it easy to sneak up on a tower unseen. The towers themselves have only two entrances—a door at ground level and holes at the top where a flying player can enter. If you're trying to attack with speed or stealth, entering through the top of the tower is recommended.

Fig. 13-37. Valhalla

When defending a tower, it's good to have one player standing at the top of the tower. This player will be vulnerable to shots from outside, but it's a great position to shoot anyone entering below. Also, if the tower is captured, this player can simply fall down onto the trigger block and retake the tower.

Raiding and trashing the enemy base is also feasible in this mission. Just wait until the enemy is thoroughly occupied with the task of claiming the three central towers.

Final Advice

Though this book contains a lot of specific advice on how to accomplish various tasks in *Tribes,* we'll leave you with some general advice.

Observe Trends

Learn to observe trends in the game. This is hard when you're first getting started. But once you get to the point where you know what's going on, you should start to look for trends and patterns in the flow of the game.

For example, you should be able to determine how the enemy is handling both offense and defense after a few minutes of play. If most of its players overcommit to attacks, you can be certain that its defense is soft. If most of its attackers use a speed attacking style, you should prepare for it instead of expecting power.

Just keep your eyes open and try to read the tone of the game. While you can't always predict what the enemy will do based on what they've done in the past, you can usually guess with great accuracy.

Be Patient

A big part of mastering *Tribes* is learning when to go full speed and when to take a break and be patient. This is best illustrated by stealth attacks. If you rush in, out of control and jumping at shadows, you'll be shredded by Sentinels and other defenses.

Learn to take your time. Run to the shadow of a wall and stop. Wait for your energy supply to restore itself. *Then* get going again. Instead of jumping through the door as soon as there's an opening, wait a moment and see if there are any enemies in the vicinity.

There are countless opportunities if you learn to sit back, watch, and wait for them.

Don't Try to Do Everything

Sometimes you'll find yourself worrying about too many things at once. Don't; unless you're the commander, there's no need. If your teammates are skillful, they'll handle their jobs. And if they aren't, well, there's no way you can help everyone at once.

Similarly, learn not to worry about remote contingencies. If you run inside an enemy base and stop because a Sentinel pops open, you can't worry about whether there's an enemy player hiding nearby. You've already committed yourself, so just carry on as if there's no defender. The best

players understand that sometimes things break their way, and sometimes they don't. They just pick a line of attack and follow it, hoping that it works, and not modifying it because some unseen defender might interfere. Once you start hesitating because something might go wrong, you're starting down a dangerous path that leads to self-defeat.

Step Back

Finally, learn to step back after every few games and analyze what's going on. If you're winning, ask yourself why. What made your team more successful than the other team? If you're losing, consider the problem. Is it the rest of the team's fault, or could you personally have done a little better?

You might occasionally want to save your games as demos and then replay them at a later date. They might be painful to watch, especially if your team lost the game. But they'll reveal your errors—and those of your team— quite clearly.
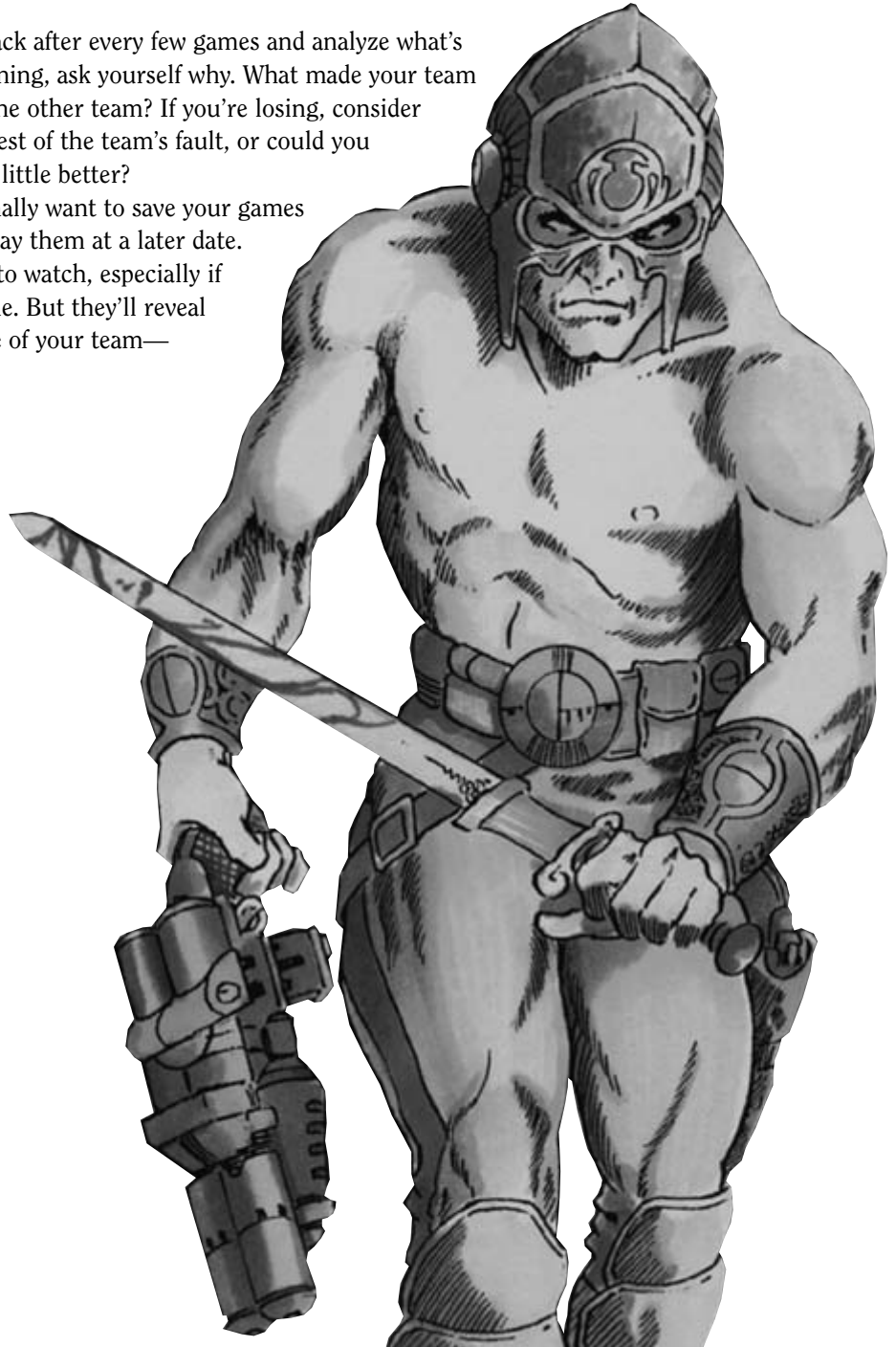
Appendix A: Joining a Tribe

Playing pickup games on the Internet can be really fun. But if you play *Tribes* a lot, you may eventually grow tired of the inherent limitations of pickup games. For example, in most pickup games you don't know your teammates. So you have no idea what they're capable of, and you aren't sure whether they'll listen if you give them orders.

The solution to this problem is to get connected to the *Tribes* community and join a tribe. Where should you start? Here are a few suggestions.

1. Play lots of *Tribes* and hone your skills. If—to paraphrase a famous quote—you wouldn't join any team that'd have you as a member, you probably aren't good enough yet. Keep working on your skills so that teams you want to join will welcome you.

2. Keep your eyes open for players that you admire. If they belong to a Tribe, their game names will contain their Tribe name. Ask that player if the Tribe has any openings.

3. Also, check out www.tribesplayers.com. There, you'll find a listing of Tribes and links to their home pages. Peruse the home pages and look for a Tribe that you'd like to join.

4. Investigate any related web sites that are linked to www.tribesplayers.com. These sites often contain detailed information on specific Tribes.

5. Use the IRC Chat feature built into *Tribes* to chat with other players. This is a great place to find Tribes looking for new members.

Don't join a Tribe that's either more dedicated to the game or more laid-back than you are. A good thing to ask right away is how often the Tribe members play and practice. If they don't have any formal battles or practice times, they're probably not too hard-core. But if they meet on a practice server every other day at 6:00 sharp, you can bet they're serious about winning.

Try to make sure that the Tribe plays at times when you're free. Also, be sure you get a good ping to that Tribe's server if you're playing with a modem connection. Lousy ping can turn you from an effective player into a walking target. Therefore, you need to be sure you'll be playing somewhere that ping isn't a problem.

Beyond that, it's all up to you. Follow the links at www.tribesplayers.com and do your best to select an appropriate tribe. Be picky, and don't commit to one that isn't right for you. Careful selection will pay off. In the right group, you'll have a great time and make several new friends.

Good luck!

Appendix B: Quick Reference Damage Tables

This appendix contains damage tables for *Tribes'* weapons. The same information appears at the end of Chapter 2, but it's presented again here for easy reference.

Base Damage

The following table shows base damage for each weapon. Base damage indicates the overall power of the weapon, expressed as a percentage. For example, the Disk Launcher has a base damage rating of 50 percent. That means that a direct disk hit will take away 50 percent of an enemy's health. The actual percentage of damage, however, depends on what armor type the target is wearing.

Table a-1. Base Damage

WEAPON	BASE DAMAGE %
Chaingun	11
Fusion Turret	25
Remote Turret	10
Blaster	10
Plasma Gun	45
Disk Launcher	50
Grenade	50
Mortar	100
Mortar Turret	132
Flyer Rocket	100
Missile Turret	80
ELF (/Sec)	4
ELF Turret (/Sec)	6
Laser Rifle	42

> *Note that most weapons' damage drops off at long range. In particular, energy weapons like the Plasma Gun and the Fusion Turret become extremely weak at extreme range. The Laser Rifle is one of the few weapons that doesn't have any long-range penalties.*
>
> *Also, note that you'll score extra damage if you hit an enemy in the head with the Laser Rifle—approximately 50 percent more. This isn't true of other weapons, so don't bother going for tricky head shots when using them.*

Armor Modifiers

A weapon's base damage doesn't tell the whole story. Different armor types absorb different amounts of damage.

Generally speaking, heavier armor absorbs more damage than lighter armor. Refer to the following table to see what percentage of each weapon's base damage gets through each type of armor.

Table a-2. Armor Modifiers

WEAPON	LIGHT %	MEDIUM %	HEAVY %
Chaingun	120	100	60
Fusion Turret	130	100	70
Remote Turret	130	100	70
Blaster	150	100	50
Plasma Gun	100	100	80
Disk Launcher	100	100	60
Grenade	120	100	80
Mortar	130	100	70
Mortar Turret	130	100	70
Flyer Rocket	100	100	60
Missile Turret	100	100	60
ELF (/Sec)	100	100	100
ELF Turret (/Sec)	100	100	100
Laser Rifle	100	100	60

Modified Damage Percentage

If you take each weapon's base damage and modify it by each armor type's armor modifier, you get Modified Damage Percentage. This is the truest measure of a weapon's damage. It shows exactly what percentage of a player's health is taken away with a direct shot from each weapon.

Table a-3. Modified Damage Percentage

WEAPON	LIGHT %	MEDIUM %	HEAVY %
Chaingun	13.2	11	6.6
Fusion Turret	32.5	25	17.5
Remote Turret	13	10	7
Blaster	15	10	5
Plasma Gun	45	45	36
Disk Launcher	50	50	30
Grenade	60	50	40
Mortar	130	100	70
Mortar Turret	171.6	132	92.4
Flyer Rocket	100	100	60
Missile Turret	80	80	48
ELF (/Sec)	4	4	4
ELF Turret (/Sec)	6	6	6
Laser Rifle	42	42	25.2
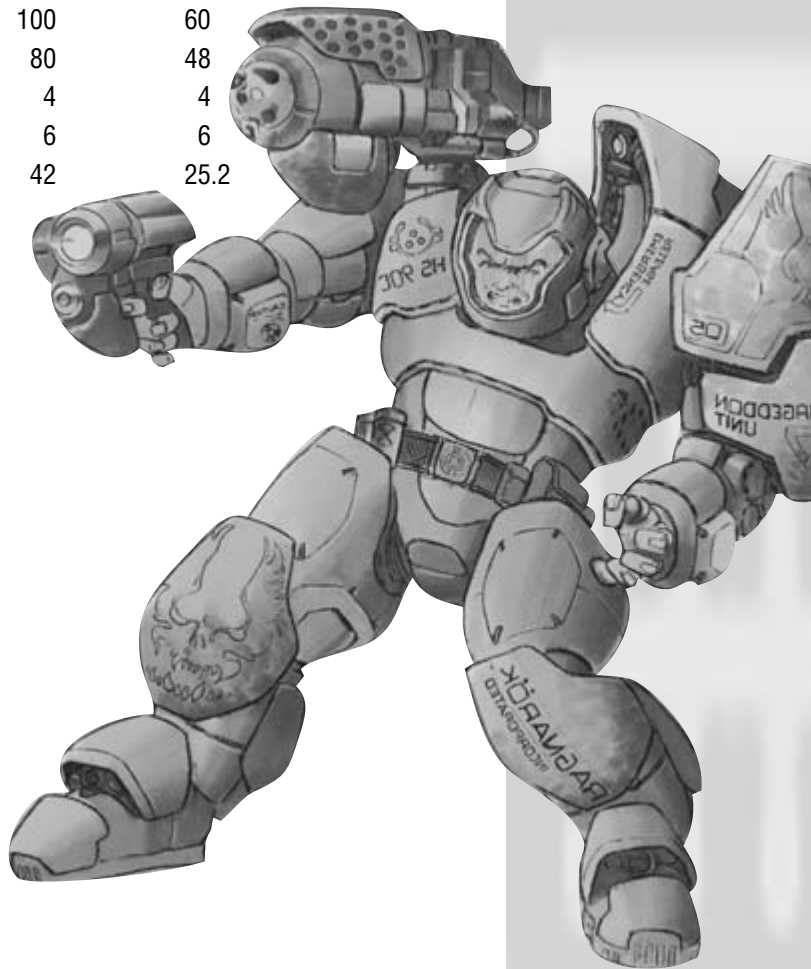
Shots to Kill

Shots to Kill is another way of presenting the data from the Modified Damage Percentage table. It shows how many perfect shots it takes to kill an enemy with each weapon.

As always, bear in mind that indirect shots deal less damage than direct hits, and head shots do extra damage when using a Laser Rifle. Also, note that players can use all sorts of tools (such as Shield Packs, Repair Packs and Repair Kits) to heal themselves in midbattle. So you can't always count on killing an enemy in the exact number of shots listed here.

Table a-4. Accurate Shots to Kill an Enemy

WEAPON	LIGHT	MEDIUM	HEAVY
Chaingun	8	10	16
Fusion Turret	4	5	6
Remote Turret	8	11	15
Blaster	7	11	21
Plasma Gun	3	3	3
Disk Launcher	3	3	4
Grenade	2	3	3
Mortar	1	2	2
Mortar Turret	1	1	2
Flyer Rocket	2	2	2
Missile Turret	2	2	3
ELF (Seconds)	25	25	25
ELF Turret (Secs)	16.67	16.67	16.67
Laser Rifle	3	3	4